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EMPLOYER OFFERED FAMILY ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

BY

LANA D. BURNSTAD

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

IN

CONSUMER STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN ECOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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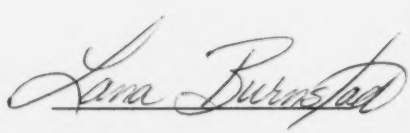

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled **EMPLOYER OFFERED ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS: THE MODERATING EFFECT OF PERCEIVED ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT** submitted by **LANA DAWN BURNSTAD** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of **MASTER OF SCIENCE.**

Janet Fast

Dr. Janet Fast

B. C. Munro

Dr. Brenda Munro

Dr. Richard Johnson

For Todd

For my brother and friend.

For the endless number of drafts I read to you,
for the endless number of presentations I practiced on you,
for your ears and for your shoulder...

For the day when you packed my suitcase when I was
flying to present at the conference in Denver.
The day when I asked, "What would I do without you?"
and you replied, "You would do just fine".

ABSTRACT

Grounded in both theoretical and empirical literature, the Bowen model (1988) investigates the reciprocal spillover effects of family-oriented benefits and policies in the corporate sector on the work and family lives of employees. From this model, a derivative was developed, the Moderating Perception model, which posits a moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between employer offered family-sensitive work provisions and the work outcome of organizational commitment. According to the Moderating Perception model, the relationship between the perceived availability of employer offered family related employee assistance provisions and organizational commitment (both affective organizational attachment and behavioural commitment) will be moderated by the employee's perception of the organization's supportiveness. Self completed questionnaires were completed by 314 employees of a major Canadian corporation. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the prediction that the perceived availability of corporate structural family supports will have a different impact on organizational commitment depending upon an employee's perception of their organization's supportiveness. Empirical support is evident for elements of the Moderating Perception Model and implications of employees' perceived support are discussed.

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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, men and women are sharing the responsibilities of work both inside and outside the home. These have forced role and responsibility changes for both genders and, due to these changes, "stress", "role strain" and "role conflict" have emerged as common side effects. These side effects can have negative impacts in both work and family systems.

In order to deflect some of the negative side effects, employers have been under pressure from working parents, social and family policy advocates and some corporate leaders to implement family related employee assistance provisions in their work places. Most of those who advocate the family-responsive work place believe that family related employee assistance provisions (F/EAPs) are beneficial for both the employees and the organization since links have been made between family responsive initiatives and various work related outcomes including decreases in absenteeism, tardiness, and grievances; and increases in productivity, morale, retention and work satisfaction. In particular, and specific to this research, corporate family sensitivity has been posited as an inhibitor of work-family stress and as a powerful tool for recruiting and retaining employees. In general, these links are consistent with the propositions and hypotheses that one would have if the effect of F/EAPs on organizational outcomes were investigated with a social exchange theoretical framework.

Social exchange with its undertone of reciprocity would suggest that employers have a vested interest in minimizing the struggle for those managing home and work responsibilities since family issues spill over into work and work issues spill over into family and since there are growing concerns about the impending labour shortage which will require employers to make their organization, and work in general, as attractive as possible. Yet however appropriate the notion of reciprocity and the link between corporate inputs and outcomes seem, employers have generally approached the implementation of family sensitive work provisions with some reluctance. Cost benefit analyses have been

performed rarely and empirical evidence from these analyses fails to indicate consistently that provisions correlate with changes in the corporate bottom line. Due to the inconsistency between theory and results, it appears critical to recognize the more intricate complexities of the work-family interaction and to look beyond social exchange theory as a theoretical framework.

For these reasons, this research uses a multidimensional approach to the work-family issue. The Moderating Perception model is introduced in which an employee's perception of organizational support is hypothesized to moderate the relationship between employer offered structural supports in the form of family related employee assistance provisions (F/EAPs) (as inputs) and the outcomes of affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment. The inclusion of this moderating influence is expected to account for the widely varying reactions by employees to the same work environment and to help explain some of the inconsistent findings in prior research between family responsive work place variables and outcomes at work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON FAMILY RELATED EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROVISIONS

There is a huge body of literature that pertains to the work-family interface. To manage and give meaning to this volume some background information is first presented. This background information makes explicit the link between stress, role strain and role conflict with the work-family interface and it illustrates the important implications this has for employers. The following confirms the need for family related employee assistance provisions in the work place, defines what they are, and identifies the types of organizations that have implemented family related provisions for their employees.

Family / Employee Assistance Provisions: Why the need?

Over the past forty years, the composition of the Canadian work force has been transformed. Once composed mainly of males who were the sole breadwinners for their families, the work force now has almost as many women as men. Women accounted for 23.5 per cent of the work force in 1951 (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C), 38 per cent in 1976 (Townson, 1987) and 56.2 per cent in 1987 (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). Continually increasing, the Conference Board of Canada estimated that 1993 would see 63.1 per cent of women working outside the home (MacBride-King & Paris, 1989). In addition, women today can expect to spend 37 years in the paid labour force (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991B), far exceeding lifetime female work force participation in years past. Although in the past women generally interrupted their employment for marriage, childbearing and childrearing, it is interesting to note that women of childbearing age now constitute the highest proportion of Canada's female work force (Fast & Skrypnek, 1993). This work force transformation affects employees, employers, and the organizations they work for.

In recent years the Canadian family has also changed. Compositional changes in the family can be attributed to smaller households as a result of decreased fertility rates and the higher incidence of divorce (McKie & Thompson, 1990) as well as increases in widowhood and births out of wedlock. In addition, the 1986 Canadian census reveals an increase in non-traditional family structures (common law arrangements, single parent families, etc.), and a growing proportion of adults over the age of 65 in the population. Further to compositional change, the lifestyles of Canadians have changed too. Examples of these changes can be seen when looking at such things as the increase in dual career and dual earner partnerships, the increase in average formal educational attainments, and the large proportion of mothers with children under the age of six who are actively participating in the work force. Family composition and lifestyle changes affect the roles of family members.

The recent work force and family changes have forced role and responsibility changes for women and men, both at work and at home. Today's work force includes women who are the sole supporters of their families, divorced men raising children alone, employees who are dependent upon day-care, after-school care and elder care, and employees with advanced levels of training and education. Due to these role and responsibility changes, traditional work and family values, routines, and commitments are being re-evaluated, and, as with any change, strain is a common result.

Although there are many positive aspects of combining work and family, it is generally accepted that simultaneous membership in both work and family systems can entail stress, role strain and role conflict for individuals, work units and families. In recent years, there has been a plethora of research from a variety of disciplines that has investigated the negative antecedents of these. Negative outcomes have been correlated with inequitable divisions of household and child care responsibilities (Gochman, 1989), daycare conflicts (Mirabelli, 1990), non-supportive families (Orthner & Pittman, 1986), social pressure (Raabe, 1990), inflexible occupational structures (Moen & Smith, 1986), non-supportive managers (Bean, 1989; Lips & Colwill, 1988), and inequalities of occupational and promotional opportunities (Schmidt & Scott, 1987). Overall, employees with young children, aging parents, and teenagers are thought to be most at risk of severe work-family stress (Voydanoff & Kelly, 1984). According to Pleck (1980), "stress", "role strain" and "role conflict" can have negative effects on the health and well-being of individuals and such things as tensions in spousal and parent-child relationships are common (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981).

Effects of role-related stress can also affect organizational outcomes. It has been stated that human resource problems faced today in the areas of high absenteeism and sick leave, tardiness, grievances, burn-out, and turnover, low satisfaction with job, pay, co-worker, supervisor and personal life, low productivity, low organizational commitment, low morale, and low quality of performance are all likely related to employees struggling to

manage dual responsibilities at home and at work (Chassie & Bhagat, 1980; Emlen & Koren, 1984; Goode, 1960; Kamerman & Kahn, 1987; Mirabelli, 1990; Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991A; Orthner & Pittman, 1986; Pleck, Staines & Lang, 1978; Ralston, 1990; Schmidt & Scott, 1987; Scordato & Harris, 1990; Spruell, 1986; and Stoner & Hartman, 1990). Specifically, absenteeism for personal or family reasons has risen by 100% over the past 10 years according to a Statistics Canada poll in 1988 (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991A) and family duties were linked to at least 25% of employee absences by 385 Canadian companies employing over 1 million Canadians (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991A). Moreover, 80% of both male and female respondents in a 1989 Conference Board of Canada survey reported that stress, from the conflicting demands of their paid work and family lives, affected their decisions regarding promotions, transfers, relocating and training (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991A).

Although it was typically assumed that women were the ones who were faced with the majority of work / family strain, research indicates that the responsibility for the care of children and elderly relatives is increasingly being shared by men (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). Consequently, stress, role strain and role conflict may not be thought of as just a "woman's issue" any more. Mehrotra and Gebeke (1992) for example, recently found that there are no significant main effects for work-family interference variables by gender and parental status after controlling for age, personal and family income, education, job position and spouse's work hours. Surprisingly, neither gender nor parental status were significantly associated with reports of personal interference, job interference, marital interference and psychological spillover. At Du Pont U.S., for example, a 1985 study of 6 600 employees showed that 18 per cent of male workers were interested in the option of part-time work to accommodate their child care responsibilities. In a similar study conducted only three years later, a full 33 per cent of men expressed an interest in the part-time option for family reasons (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C).

Men's increasing participation in family responsibilities is also illustrated by the results of a large survey in which 30 percent of male respondents said they had refused a job, promotion or transfer because it would mean less time spent with their families (Chapman, 1987). In another study, men were more likely than women to attribute their absenteeism (14 percent of men and 5 per cent of women) and lateness (21 per cent of men and 5 per cent of women) to family responsibilities at Camco Inc. (Canada's largest manufacturer and distributor of major home appliances) (Ontario Women's Directorate and Camco Inc., 1992). Many men are pursuing more balanced lifestyles today and they are increasingly exploring work settings and work arrangements that will better enable them to participate more in their family responsibilities.

Since tension and frustration are commonly experienced by those who are struggling to manage their working and non-working lives, implications can be seen for both employees and their employers.

Family / Employee Assistance Provisions: What are they?

Employers are recognizing that the personal lives of employees affect working lives and so they are becoming more involved in this area. Historically, employee assistance programs (EAPs) were instituted to curb alcoholism in the work place. Interventions were focused almost exclusively on the individual troubled employee. With the recent changes in work force and family composition, however, this focus has shifted as family problems are now considered the most common of worker difficulties (Jankowski, Holtgraves & Gerstein, 1989). To illustrate, one survey of American companies indicated that 94 per cent of the 110 companies with an employee assistance program provided access to marital and family counseling and it was the second most used service after treatment for alcoholism (Kamerman & Kahn, 1987). Family problems therefore are becoming increasingly recognized among employers as being factors that can affect an employee's work.

Family related employee assistance provisions are designed, therefore, to help employees better balance the often competing demands that stem from combining paid work with care giving responsibilities. Prior to the implementation of structured F/EAPs in the work place, whether a worker got time off to attend to family responsibilities (such as a sick child, a dentist appointment, or a parent-teacher interview) was often left to the discretion of the employee's immediate supervisor. As the report by Monica Townson Associates Inc. (1988) states, "In many cases, employers appear willing to turn a blind eye if employees use their own sick leave entitlement or vacation time to deal with emergency family responsibilities". F/EAPs can offer workers greater flexibility and control over the times and places they work. Specific examples of alternative work arrangements and leave policies include "flex time" with negotiable starting and quitting times, "flex place" with many employees opting to do their work at home, "part-time scheduling" for those wishing to work fewer hours than a regular full time schedule, "personal / family leave policies" which provide legitimate opportunities to take time off from work for reasons other than own sickness, bereavement, etc. and "maternity / paternity sensitivity" which refers to an extensive leave policy for childbirth / adoption beyond regular sick leave and a formal guarantee of a fully comparable job on the worker's return. These provisions allow employees a legitimate means for taking time for family responsibilities.

Two specific examples of family sensitive policies that cover alternative work arrangements and leave are those of the Toronto Dominion Bank and the Edmonton Journal. The Toronto Dominion Bank's dependent care policy recognizes that, on occasion, employees require time away from work to attend to the emergency needs of a dependent. Employees can request a maximum of three days paid leave per year to attend to urgent family situations. The bank feels the benefits are twofold: strengthening employee morale, and minimizing misuse of the short-term disability program (interview with Catherine A. Woods, Manager, Employee Relations, Policy, Toronto Dominion Bank in Ontario Women's Directorate 1991C). The Edmonton Journal has included 'family

leave' with their regular sick leave policy. This allows parent and non-parent employees 12 days off per year whether they be for their own illness or their dependents'.

Other examples of available F/EAPs include child care information and referral services, elder care referral services, relocation information and assistance, personal and family counseling, and the offering of various seminars and workshops. For example, when Shell Canada Ltd. relocated its headquarters from Toronto to Calgary in 1984, it moved 425 employees. Calgary was economically depressed at the time, so there were few job prospects for spouses. To aid, Shell's personnel department gave working spouses access to word processing facilities, offered them help with resume preparation, and counseled them on where they might best fit into the Calgary job market. The company also did its best to inform various sectors of the Calgary business community about the arrival of potential employees. Shell itself hired several spouses to begin work in Calgary (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). Another example is that of the Toronto Blue Jays baseball organization. The Blue Jays organization recognizes that an athlete's performance depends on both mental and physical well-being. This employee assistance provision can cover any number of problems a player might have, be they emotional, financial, marital, or substance related. By helping players and their families work out difficulties, the ball club believes it stands to benefit (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). Finally, Manulife Financial has recognized that the population is aging so they have expanded their on-line computerized information service to include both child care and elder care information. "Taking Care" is a 24-hour-a-day, seven-day-a-week program designed by experts in both child and elder care (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C).

In addition to the F/EAPs already mentioned, there are also provisions such as comprehensive or supplemented dependent care assistance, on-site care facilities, and long term assistance insurance. An example of a family related employee assistance provision that offers convenience and financial assistance for employees with care giving obligations is that of the Edmonton Journal. The Edmonton Journal has an on-site child care centre

that is free for employees with young children and is part of their extensive family responsive work place provisions.

In general, EAP designers are recognizing the importance of offering family intervention to their workers. A Conference Board survey of business executives shows that 70 per cent believe work-family policies will be "highly important" in the years ahead. "Family fringes", says a leading personnel consultant, "is the issue of the 90s" (Cordtz, 1990). Due to the stress, role strain and role conflict experienced by both male and female employees, people are increasingly interested in employer implemented family-sensitive work provisions.

Family / Employee Assistance Provisions: Who has taken action?

Although business executives are recognizing the importance of a work-family balance, in general, the employers and companies who support work-family policies are limited. Kamerman and Kahn (1987) state that the supportive companies are typically the large, progressive, high technology, core sector industries with an emphasis on human resources and / or are businesses within Scandinavian / Japanese cultures. McNeely and Fogarty (1988) agree and add that business responsiveness is sensitive to both the company's size and its financial position. Offering benefits is expensive and, as companies extend and include an employee's family, the cost increases. In one study, financial costs were given as the main reason why benefits such as sick child leave and paid maternity and parental leaves were not offered (Wolcott, 1991). It also appears that benefit costs are increasing over time as benefits accounted for 17 percent of compensation costs in 1966, 22 percent in 1974, and 27 percent in 1989 (Wiatrowski, 1990).

Five basic company characteristics are common to the implementation of family supportive provisions. Often the company is facing a labour shortage and family supportiveness may be seen as a strong employee recruitment and retention tool. Second, the company may be having problems with high rates of absenteeism and tardiness. Third

and fourth, it may have a more people oriented management style and it may be concerned about its image in the community. And finally, whether or not a company is unionized has also been shown to be related to receptiveness. In general, heavily unionized companies are typically less receptive than partially unionized or non-unionized companies (McNeely & Fogarty, 1988). Although there have also been suggestions that some employers offer family sensitive work provisions to help meet union demands (Wiatrowski, 1990) others believe they are implemented to deter the formation of unions all together. The general lack of union receptivity may be due in part to the fact that unions generally have not been involved with high growth industries or white collar workers, and they tend to be concentrated in industries with small proportions of female employees. It is notable however, that female and white collar workers have constituted two of the fastest growing segments of the work force.

Typically, those who have expanded family-oriented policies and practices have based their decisions on more than ethical or humanitarian grounds. The concern for the "bottom line" has always been predominant (Bohen, 1984). Statuto (1984) delineated two sources of corporate motivation to initiate policy changes. First, there is a sense of corporate responsibility and second, enlightened self-interest. The concept of corporate responsibility reflects corporations who give to a community without the intent of increasing their own bottom line profits. The enlightened self-interest motivation, by far the more common motivation, refers to the case in which the impetus for change centers on bottom line profits: worker recruitment, productivity, retention, etc. Although it would be comforting to think that corporate policy changes are based simply on the motivation to enhance family well-being, Statuto (1984) noted that most of the changes in corporate programs and benefit packages documented in four large-scale surveys were actually initiated because they were believed to be either cost-effective or in the employer's self-interest (enhanced corporate image for example). In general, employers are reluctant to

change their employee policies and programs until outcomes of greater organizational effectiveness are empirically supported.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A review of the social science literature yields three general conceptual models describing the relationship between family and work: a separate sphere model, a spillover effects model, and an interactive model of system interdependence. These are important to describe as they lay the historical foundation for the newer conceptual frameworks relating to work and family. These three models are different in terms of their underlying assumptions, their emphasis on the nature, degree, and direction of the relationships between social systems and the nature and magnitude of system impact on the individual. Chow and Berheide (1988) have provided an excellent overview of these frameworks and these will be briefly described in order to introduce Bowen's (1988) model which inspired the development of the Moderating Perception model and it is the Moderating Perception model that was used in this study.

The Separate Sphere Model

Although social scientists have understood the concept of system interdependence for years, family and work were traditionally studied as two separate and independent systems with different sets of norms and functions. The separate sphere model sees family and work as distinctive systems with the family as the typical arena for women and work as the typical arena for men. This was the only framework that was used to understand the work-family relationship less than one generation ago. The separate sphere model asserts system independence. The family is characterized by different domains associated with distinctive sex-typed traits -- men fulfilling instrumental and materialistic needs and women providing

expressive and emotional support. As can be seen in Figure 1, this model suggests that family and work should remain separate in order to function properly and that the division of labour by sex should be maintained in order to avoid conflict.

The ideology of separatism in this model has several implications that do not fit with the work and family issues people face today (Chow & Berheide, 1988). First, for women, separatism tends to trivialize both their existing participation in the work force and the unpaid work they do while, for men, it trivializes their contribution to family. Second, separatism shifts the attention of social scientists, educators, policy makers, and practitioners away from examining the relationship between social institutions to the study of the distinct institutions themselves.

As the labour force participation of married women has increased over the past few decades, so has social scientists' concern with the linkages between paid work and family spheres. As a framework for approaching contemporary family issues, it is clear that the separate sphere model is outdated. After decades of research that treated work and family as separate institutions, many researchers now agree with Kanter (1977) who argues against the "myth of separate worlds," that fails to recognize the interdependence of work and family systems.

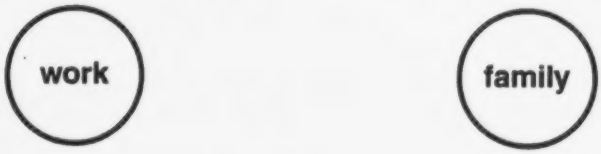

Figure 1 : Seperate Sphere Model

Spillover Effects Model

More recently, research exploring the interplay between work and family has generally taken the spillover perspective in hypothesizing linkages between work and family. Unlike the separate sphere model which denies the intimate connection between family and work, the spillover effects model recognizes that one system may have a unidirectional spillover effect on the other. Based on the similarities and congruencies between events and satisfactions in the work and family sphere, the spillover perspective posits that the structure, values, and experiences in the work arena can either facilitate or undermine a person's ability to discharge responsibilities at home, or vice versa (Bergermaier, Borg, & Champoux, 1984; Kanter, 1977).

As can be seen in Figure 2, the spillover effects model departs from the previous model by recognizing system permeability. Individuals can be seen as having simultaneous memberships in multiple social systems and the social and psychological consequences of simultaneous memberships are emphasized (Chow & Berheide, 1988). This model dispels the notion that family and work are isolated from each other.

Although the spillover effects model is preferable to the separate sphere model, it has a major drawback. Even though it recognizes system permeability, it has been criticized for inadequately dealing with the reciprocity of the interwoven relationships between work and family systems as spillover is seen as being unidirectional.

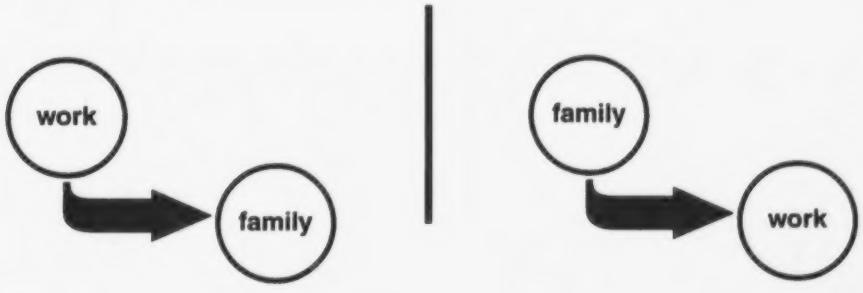

Figure 2 : Spillover Effects Model

Interactive Model

The interactive model was developed to refine the separate sphere and spillover effects models. This model resulted from the need for a more integrating model that could study work and family beyond 'women and their families' and 'men and their work' to one which better combined the intimate relationship between the two (Voydanoff, 1984). This shift from separate studies of family and work to an integrated one has been evident in recent family research (Chow & Berheide, 1988). The interactive model recognizes the mutual interdependence of family and work, taking into account the reciprocal influences of work and family and acknowledging their independent as well as their joint effects, directly and indirectly, on both the psychological state and social conditions of individuals. In other words, work and family life are inextricably intertwined, and stress or conflict at their interface may present an obstacle to fulfilling responsibilities in either system. Similarly, a successful interface of work and family can lead to rewarding experiences in both systems.

In essence, the interactive model, as seen in Figure 3, acknowledges that both positive and negative outcomes from combining work and family can depend upon the interplay between various work and family conditions (as illustrated by the black circles) including reactions to work, effectiveness of coping, the use of resources, social networks, etc.

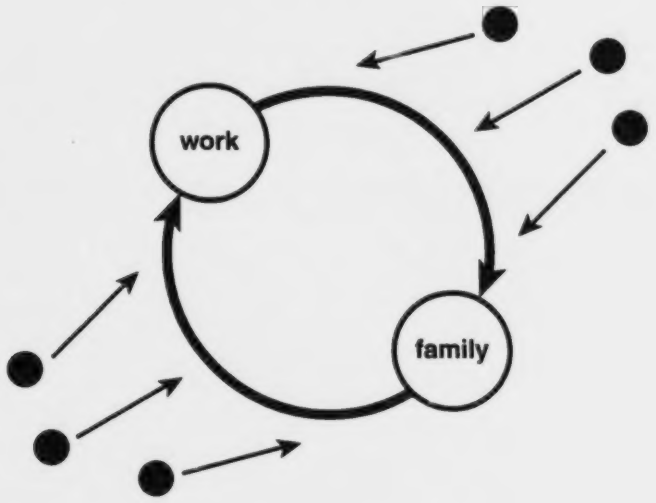

Figure 3 : Interactive Model

Bowen: A Conceptual Model of the Relationship Between Corporate Support Mechanisms and the Work and Family Lives of Employees

Bowen's conceptual model has theoretical underpinnings of the spillover effects model and central elements of the interactive model. The basic assumption of Bowen's model is work and family interdependency. Outcomes at work and at home are considered reciprocal. Because Bowen's model accounts for reciprocal relationships, it is evident that aspects of both the spillover perspective and the interactive perspective are borrowed even though Bowen himself refers to this as simply 'spillover'.

It is Bowen's (1988) conceptual model that provides the general structure of the more specific model (the Moderating Perception model) which emerged for the purpose of this research. Bowen's model was chosen because it is grounded in both theoretical and empirical literature, it has an emphasis on family related employee assistance provisions and also because employee perceptions are seen as moderating variables.

As can be seen in Figure 4, Bowen's work environment is dichotomized into structural and dynamic components. Dynamic features of the work place are those considered motivators or intrinsic rewards. They include social-environmental characteristics of the job and work setting such as the challenge or interest of the job itself, the employee's degree of autonomy or level of responsibility, and the opportunity provided for personal growth or career advancement in the corporation. Structural features of the work environment are more extrinsic to the job. They include such things as the level of pay and fringe benefits, company policies and practices regarding employee working conditions, the nature of interpersonal relations in the corporation, and the types and range of corporate supports for the family lives of employees.

The work environment (both structural and dynamic) is predicted to affect outcomes both at work and at home. These work and home outcomes feed back into the corporate culture and philosophy which, in turn, affects the structural and dynamic work environments. At work, an employee's satisfaction with the job, productivity on tasks,

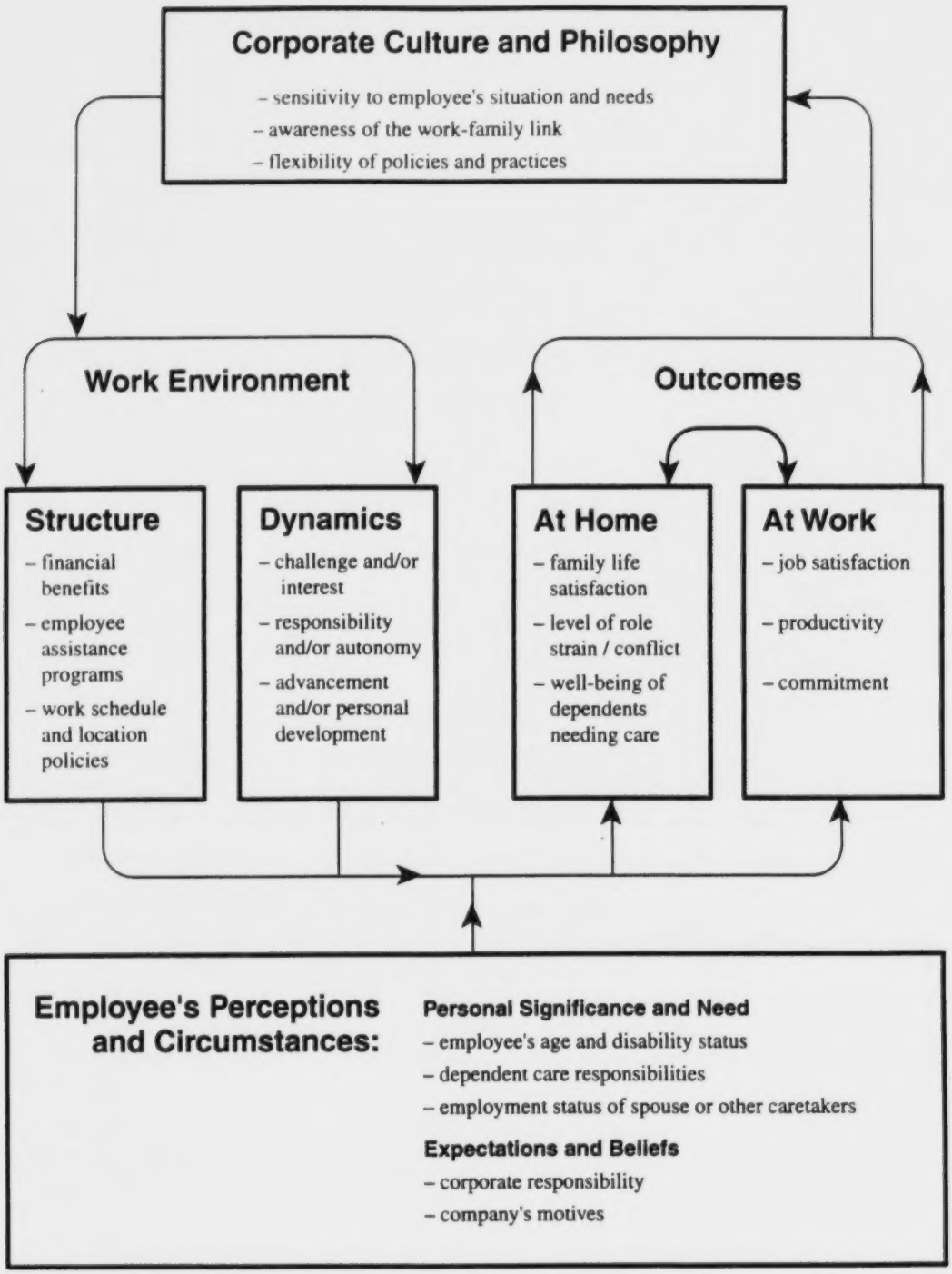

Figure 4 : Bowen (1988) : A conceptual model of the relationship between corporate support mechanisms and the work and family lives of employees

and job commitment are posited as being affected. At home, the family life satisfaction, the level of role strain and conflict, and the well-being of dependents are predicted outcomes. These reciprocal effects (work on family and family on work) are moderated by an individual's personal perceptions (expectations and beliefs about the corporation's responsibility and their motives) and family circumstances (including the employee's age and disability status, dependent care responsibilities, and the employment status of spouse or other caretaker).

The Moderating Perception Model

The Moderating Perception model is a derivative of Bowen's (1988) model. The Moderating Perception model proposes that the affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment derived from the self-reported / believed availability of family related employee assistance packages at the place of employment can be moderated by an individual's perception of their organizational support. In line with Bowen, the Moderating Perception model considers the joint or interaction effect that occurs with the combination of particular work conditions and particular employee perceptions on a work outcome. Unlike Bowen's model however, the Moderating Perception model acknowledges the independent effects that work conditions have on a work outcome. This model is illustrated in Figure 5.

In this model, the nature and extent of linkages between the work environment and outcomes at work are hypothesized as being moderated by the employee's perception of organizational support. In addition, it is proposed that an employee's perceived organizational support will have both an independent effect and an interaction effect on both affective and behavioural organizational commitment. The Moderating Perception model separates itself from the interactive framework because the latter is built upon the assumptions of mutual interdependence and reciprocal influences. The Moderating

Perception model does not test for reciprocal effects as it is uni-directional and proposes two independent effects and one moderating effect for each outcome variable.

Specifically, both the known availability of various family related employee assistance provisions and the perception of organizational support are proposed to have independent effects on two distinct types of organizational commitment (affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment). However, in addition to these independent effects, it is also proposed than an employee's perception of organizational support will moderate the relationship between the self reported availability of employer offered structural supports (family related employee assistance provisions) and both affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment.

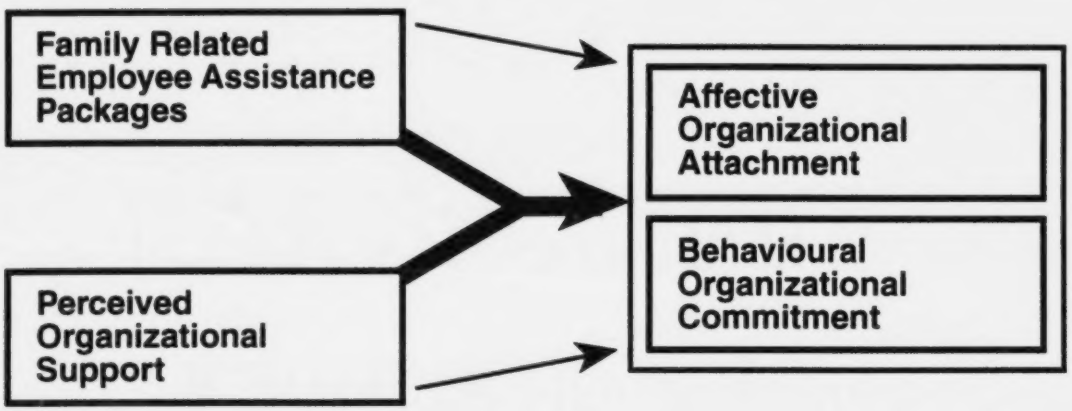

Figure 5 : The Moderating Perception Model

In essence, the model clearly suggests that in addition to structural corporate family support offered, an individual's perception of the organizational support they receive has important implications for the outcome variables of affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment. From this model, four research objectives emerged.

Research Objectives

1. To determine if there is a relationship between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provisions and affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment.

2. To determine whether the type of provisions under examination affect the relationships between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provisions and affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment.

3. To examine the relationship between the perception of organizational support and affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment.

4. To determine whether the relationships between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provisions and affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment vary when there are varying degrees of perceived organizational support. That is, to determine if there is an interaction effect between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance benefits and the perception of organizational support.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review is written from an employer's perspective and is divided into three sections. The first part of the review makes explicit the need for employers to distinguish between attitudinal and behavioural organizational commitments. These, it will be argued, are critical to separate if corporate bottom lines are to be understood or manipulated. In the second section, the gap, or lack of solid and consistent empirical

evidence regarding family related employee assistance provisions and changes in the corporate bottom line are discussed. And finally, the "perception of organization support" is introduced in the third section as a plausible moderating factor which may explain some of the gaps and inconsistent findings in prior research between organizational inputs (offering family related employee assistance provisions) and outcomes (affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment).

Information is presented which suggests that the factors which influence an employee's organizational commitment are important pieces of information for an employer. It is argued that being better able to predict and control the recruitment and retention of employees has direct bottom line implications.

Affective Organizational Attachment and Behavioural Organizational Commitment: Important Outcome Variables for Employers Today

Although it has been suggested that the stress, role strain and role conflict of employees managing work and family roles can negatively affect many different organizational outcomes (organizational commitment; overall job satisfaction; satisfaction with pay, work, co-workers, and supervision; and personal-life satisfaction, morale, productivity, etc.), employers generally remain reluctant to change their employee policies and programs due to a lack of conclusive evidence indicating that these will positively affect corporate bottom line profits. Here it will be argued however, that employers <u>can</u> detect empirical changes in organizational effectiveness (i.e. profits) when F/EAPs are implemented in the workplace by focusing on organizational commitment as an outcome variable. Organizational commitment is proposed as being an especially important, and timely outcome for Canadian business managers to investigate. This importance is realized when the Canadian labour force trends are studied.

Current trends indicate that Canada will be facing a labour shortage in the next 20 years. This impending labour shortage may encourage changes in management and

institutional practice in order for business to be better safeguarded against the potentially damaging effects. To help offset the labour shortage, it is proposed that employers will need to concentrate more on their employees' organizational commitment. However, throughout the literature concerning the work / family interface and organizational outcomes, there is just a rough consensus on the definition of the construct of organizational commitment.

What has commonly been referred to as organizational commitment in the past has generally encompassed a combination of affective attitudes toward an organization as well as behavioural intentions to stay or leave. When affective attitudes and behavioural intentions are measured separately, conceptually distinct and independent information can be gathered (Meyer & Allen, 1984; Bielby & Bielby, 1984) and separate bottom line implications can be involved. When affective attitudes and behavioural intentions are summed, and when simplistic assumptions are made about the presence or absence of subjective attachments based solely upon organizational retention behaviour, error is predicted. Although role specialization (men as the family breadwinners, women as the caregivers and homemakers) may influence men's and women's behavioural commitment to their organization, it is argued that affective attachments are distinctly different indicators of organizational commitment and that an affective attachment to one's organization cannot be inferred from one's years of service (a commonly used behavioural indicator of commitment). To illustrate the distinctiveness, just because someone has worked for the same organization for twenty years (a behavioural commitment), it does not mean that one can infer that they are completely happy there, that they contribute to their co-worker's level of moral or that they have a strong sense of loyalty to the organization (affective attachment).

The confusion over the general term "commitment" is evident throughout the literature. Although the examples given below pertain to confusions with interpreting "role commitments" rather than "organizational commitments", the point of discussion is to

realize the complexities of behavioural and attitudinal orientations regardless of how they are applied. Common in the literature is the suggestion that men are increasingly becoming "more committed" to family over work (see for example Staines & Pleck, 1983; Staines, Pottick, & Fudge, 1985). Yet labour statistics would indicate that this commitment does not apply to a behavioural form of commitment. Statistics indicate that many more men are participating in the work force than staying at home even if, according to social scientists, they have a stronger "commitment" to home. By default, the type of commitment Staines and Pleck (1983) and Staines, Pottick and Fudge (1985) are referring to is undoubtedly a social psychological attachment. Affective attachment is very different from behavioural commitment as research would suggest that men do not spend more time at their family related work than their paid employment outside the home (however, child care participation and housework by fathers does appear to be gradually increasing from what it used to be in previous years [Darling-Fisher & Tiedje, 1990; Hoffman, 1986]). Similar to the statement that men are more committed to family over work, it is also common to read that women are increasingly committed to paid work outside the home. Statistics would indicate that, indeed, women are participating more in the work force than ever before but nowhere is it found that this new behavioural commitment affects the affective attachment to a woman's family. In essence, there is confusion with the term "commitment" as statistics indicate that while women are participating more in the work force, men are not necessarily increasing participation in housework and child care duties at the same rate -- yet both are said to be newly committed to these domains. What has to be inferred is that the commitment pertaining to women is of a behavioural nature and that the commitment pertaining to men is of an affective nature.

Although the majority of early research pertaining to the construct of organizational commitment fails to distinguish between affective and behavioural components, a few articles published in the 1960s and 1970s explore affective organizational attachment and behavioural commitment as isolated work related outcomes. It is necessary to document

the early research that investigates work-family strain and its effect on behavioural commitment and affective attachment in order to understand the assumptions and biases that people, and employers specifically, have about the men and women who work for them today. By empirically documenting the changes that have taken place in the last thirty years in men's and women's behavioural and affective reactions to work-family strain, the impetus for modern organizational change is further realized.

For example, research from 1964 concluded that women who experienced role stress from the dispersion of time and energy among multiple, disparate roles (like combining work and family) identified less with their organization and were less involved in it (affective attachment) (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek & Rosenthal, 1964). In the past, female employment patterns tended to be marked by career interruption and a greater likelihood of part-time, part-year employment relative to male counterparts (behavioural commitment) (Bielby & Bielby, 1988a; Blau & Ferber, 1985). This suggests that in the past, women were not as attitudinally or behaviourally committed to their work.

Interestingly, a comparative study from the 1970s on behavioural organizational commitment among working men and women indicated that women were as committed to their work as were men (Forisha, 1978). This is surprising as it has generally been believed that women in the 1970s were not as behaviourally committed as their male counterparts regardless of employment variables. It was noted however, that the effect of family demands on priority setting significantly affects job-related behaviour (turnover) of women but not of men (Mathews, Collins, & Cobb, 1974). This makes sense as most women in the 1970s (and prior) had children and, of course, the family demands that go along with them. A more recent US study by Lorence (1987) examined trends in commitment to work and, like Forisha (1978), found no significant difference between the level of work commitment for men and women but in this study, this comparable level of commitment was not seen until the year 1985. Prior to 1985 no significant difference in the

level of work commitment for men is observed while women's work commitment significantly increased over time until 1985.

The other component, affective attachment, is thought to exist when the "identity of the person (is linked) to the organization" or when the "goals of the organization and those of the individual become increasingly integrated or congruent" (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). It appears then, that an affective commitment is an attitude that results when an individual identifies with a particular organization and its goals and wishes to maintain membership in order to achieve these goals. Research during the 1960s and 1970s also supported the notion that affective organizational outcomes (such as loyalty and job satisfaction) are influenced by role stress in working women. Stevens, Beyer and Trice (1978), for example, found that role-related variables such as work/role overload and role conflict were important determinants of an employee's affective commitment to the organization.

From these examples it is clear that there needs to be a distinction between affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitments. By investigating affective attachment and behavioural commitment as two distinct outcomes, one can more precisely measure and realize information that directly relates to corporate profits.

First, employee retention reflects an organizational commitment of a behavioural orientation and this is an important goal for organizations and employers. Many agree that a convincing argument that encourages employer responsiveness to family needs involves the preparation for labour shortages (see for example, Aldous, 1990; Galinsky & Stein, 1990; and Raabe, 1990). Understanding the relationship between F/EAPs and employee retention is important for an employer as corporate resources can be better targeted to achieve greater outputs. An illustration of the financial relevance that behavioural commitment holds is seen in Mirabelli's (1990) study revealing that administrative costs associated with hiring new employees run as high as 93 per cent of an employee's first year's salary. Similarly, Corning Glass Company estimates that the cost of replacing each

worker the company loses is $40 000 (Hewlitt, 1989) and for the New Jersey pharmaceutical firm, Merck and Company, the cost of losing a worker and retraining a successor is one and one half times that person's annual salary (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). The implication of all of this is seen when Glass (1988) states that the majority of women who have left the labour force did not leave because of pregnancy or childbearing but because of supervisor insensitivity and poor, or inflexible, working conditions. Although pregnancy is strongly associated with leaving the labour force (Bean, 1989; Glass, 1988; Mehrotra & Gebeke, 1992), workplace constraints such as lack of flexibility, inconvenient hours of work, and lack of adequate child care may be responsible for many job exits following childbirth. It seems reasonable then, that dependent care assistance provisions such as on site child care facilities, extended child care leaves and maternity leave pay top-up; alternative working arrangements such as flexible working hours, part-time work options, job sharing options and work at home options; and benefits that are designed to enhance an employee's physical and mental health such as on-site fitness facilities and personal / family counseling may actually lower the rate of job exits after childbirth. As an example, a Canadian survey conducted by the Conference Board of Canada found that of 1 600 organizations and more than 11 000 public and private sector employed respondents, over 10 per cent said they had left a position or job in the past because of work and family conflicts and more than 14 per cent said they were considering leaving their current employers for the same reasons (MacBride-King and Paris, 1989). Once again, minimizing workplace constraints may help retain employees and enhance employee stability since employees may be reluctant to leave jobs that in any way assist them in parenthood.

Second, employee recruitment reflects an organizational commitment of an affective orientation and in a recessionary period when most businesses and industries are facing cutbacks in manpower, budgets and other resources, it is important to have a pool of highly qualified employees from which to select for employment. The emerging problem of a

labour shortage is one that has received little publicity in Canada to this point (The Worklife Report, 1989) although Huselid and Day (1991) confirm that there has been more attention given to the factors that influence the stability and intensity of employee dedication recently. This recent attention is understandable when the projected demographics of the Canadian work force are studied. In common with other countries, Canada is headed for a period of slower labour force growth. Projections indicate that during the 1990s only about 180,000 persons will join the work force each year, compared to over 200,000 during the 1980s and over 300,000 during the 1970s. The predicted shortages pertain mostly to trained personnel in high technology and service industries.

Shortages of trained personnel in high technology and service industries pose a threat to both Canadian business and to the Canadian economy as a whole. Today our organizations and businesses are faced with competitive challenges that were unknown to us in the past. For example, Japan, as well as a number of newly industrialized countries (such as Taiwan and South Korea), continue to compete successfully in world markets. The integration of the European Common market in 1992 and the development of other trading blocs may also pose a challenge for Canada. And, of course, the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Mexico will continue to foster a more competitive environment within North America (Larson, 1989). Competitive environments do not prosper with shortages of trained personnel in high technology and service industries. Because Canadian employers increasingly will find themselves competing with each other for workers, it appears that organizations will need to be as attractive as possible in an employee's market to draw skilled individuals into their company. Some companies are introducing benefits and workplace provisions such as on-site fitness facilities and personal / family counseling benefits which address the physical and emotional health needs of their employees in order to appear more attractive as an employer. Fern Stimpson, Manulife Financial's Director of Employee Services, says their family / employee assistance programs, which are available to the 1 800 employees in the company's head office in Toronto, have had far-reaching

benefits with respect to their recruitment efforts. Manulife Financial asserts that their F/EAPs have helped attract, and keep, top-quality employees by enabling them to balance their dual roles of work and family (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C). It is likely that dependent care assistance benefits, alternative working arrangements and benefits that are designed to enhance an employee's physical and mental health can affect decisions to enter the work force. For example, the US Bureau of the Census, (1986) found that 39% of unemployed women are willing to work given affordable child care. Employers, therefore, need to respond to both the growing field of competitors and to the personal needs of the new labour force in order to present an attractive place to work for prospective employees. To be attractive for prospective employees and to be competitive with other business, employers may need to strive to improve the factors that would increase their employees' affective organizational attachments.

In summary, because affective attachment and behavioural commitment are not perfectly correlated and because each has been shown to contribute to different organizational outcomes, it is argued that employers will benefit the most from information reflecting both affective and behavioural components. To offset the impending labour shortage, it is proposed that employers will need to concentrate on successfully retaining and recruiting their employees; work force retention (behavioural commitment) and labour recruitment (affective attachment) affect an organizations bottom line. Some studies have found that structural F/EAPs in the work place can affect both an employee's decision to join an organization as well as their decision to stay or leave. In Magid's (1983) opinion, the ability to attract a talented, stable work force is the primary motivation for establishing family sensitive services. Family sensitive programs and policies, therefore, may be an attractive organizational feature for prospective employees and enhancing an employee's behavioural organizational commitment will be a buffer against labour shortages. For all these reasons, it is proposed that endorsing and maintaining first-rate family related employee assistance provisions may give clear signals to employees (and potential

employees) that the company not only wants them but also that it cares about them and that it demonstrates a commitment to their health and well-being (Bowen, 1988; Wiatrowski, 1990).

The Gap Between F/EAPs as Corporate Inputs and Changes in the Bottom Line

It has been shown that employers are taking a more serious look at work and family linkages (Bowen, 1990) and organizational outcomes than they have in the past. Canadian labour force trends indicate that institutional practices may need to change in the near future to better safeguarded business against the impending shortage of skilled people in the labour force. To offset the labour shortage, it is thought that employers will need to concentrate on successfully retaining and recruiting their employees. In theory, family related employee assistance provisions (F/EAPs) are postulated as being an answer to these concerns.

As previously stated, most academics who advocate the family-responsive work place believe that family related employee assistance provisions are profitable due to the theoretical links that have been made between corporate policies, programs and practices, and various work related outcomes (Louis Harris & Associates, 1981; McNeely & Fogarty, 1988; Orthner & Pittman, 1986). These links have undertones of reciprocity whereby employees will reciprocate an employer's supportive provisions in the form of increased productivity, retention, etc. The notion of reciprocity would suggest that if an employer helps an employee deal with the management of home and work responsibilities, the employee would be less likely to have a high rate of absenteeism, sick leave, tardiness, burn-out, and so forth. At this point, however, businesses have generally been reluctant to change their employee policies and programs because of the lack of empirical evidence consistently supporting gains in bottom line profits. Although the rationale and theoretical link behind family related employee assistance provisions appears logical, there is a lack of

solid and consistent empirical evidence indicating that changes in personnel policies, benefit programs, or facilities will have a positive influence on organizational effectiveness (Albert, Smythe & Brook, 1985; Orthner & Pittman, 1986; Stillman & Bowen, 1985). Kamerman and Kahn (1987) add that the mass of family friendly business literature refers to a small number of leading companies and they state that the 'evidence' can be criticized for being anecdotal, impressionistic, descriptive and program specific. Christensen & Staines (1990), Galinsky & Stein (1990), Kingston (1990), and Raabe (1990) agree and add that reported results are generally inaccurate, overstated, misinterpreted, or ambiguous due to the small sample sizes, low response rates, and limited sampling frames. In general, most reports reflect impressions and perceptions of work related outcomes after corporate F/EAP implementation, yet the majority of published literature is not empirically based.

Because corporate results are generally inconsistent and inconclusive, several important research questions emerge. Specifically, why are there inconsistent results for different corporations that have introduced similar family responsive provisions? and, why have some employees realized no benefit from, and / or chosen not to use some employer offered F/EAPs?, and, why is there a void between what one would expect based on theory and actual results? The answer to these questions may lie in intervening influences that have not been identified yet in the literature which 'confuse' the relationship (which initially was suspected to be direct) between employer offered structural family support packages and profitable corporate outcomes.

In the following section the notion of an employee's perceived organizational support is introduced as a plausible moderating factor which may explain the widely varying reactions of employees to the same work environment and some of the inconsistent findings in prior research between work place variables and outcomes at work. Due to the demographic forecast for the Canadian work force, evidence that supports the moderating effect of the link between family related employee assistance provisions and organizational commitment is of particular concern. To present this argument, gaps in the current literature are focused

on which help to support the plausibility of employee perceptions as being a moderating factor between organizational inputs (offering family related employee assistance provisions) and outcomes (affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment).

Perceived Support

A confusing situation occurs when an employer / organization offers some form of family supportive provisions and either employees don't use them or the employer realizes no business return from having them. It is indisputable that employees today testify to having stress, role strain and/or role conflict from combining their work and personal lives. It is well documented that employees want family responsive workplace policies implemented. It is theoretically logical that there would be a norm of reciprocation between employers and employees with employees going to greater efforts (showing greater attendance, retention and performance) to fulfill organizational goals (Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986) when the organization has aided the employee in reaching his or hers. However, this outcome has not consistently been realized (see for example Christensen & Staines, 1990; Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Kingston, 1990; and Raabe, 1990). It becomes understandable then that employers are reluctant to offer these supportive policies and programs when either employees don't use them or when positive organizational outcomes are not empirically seen in the end.

These two scenarios plague the literature. Surprisingly, there is little research that delves into the "why" of these situations. Why do parent and non-parent employees push for these family responsive corporate benefits but then fail to use them? Why are employers promised positive business returns to find none?

A handful of studies have tried to discover the factors that could be intervening to complicate the reciprocating process that, at first glance, would seem so logical. A possible explanation is that researchers may have failed to detect the gaps between formal and

informal policy and between policy and actual practice. Raabe and Gessner's (1988) study probed the practices of 30 employers in New Orleans through in-depth interviews. They found that some employers were often actually more accommodating than their written policies indicated. That is, a company may be classified as being unresponsive to their employees' family needs in formal policy but, in actual practice, is flexible and accommodating. Kingston (1990) suggests that the operational definition of responsiveness may lead us to overlook fundamental ways in which business policies are not-responsive to families, or in other words, that some corporations are responsive to workers' needs without it being a part of the formal company policy. Alternatively, employees may find their supposedly responsive polices to be subverted in practice. Kamerman and Kahn's (1987) case studies of diverse firms show that employees may not be consistently informed of their benefits, be pressured not to use all of them, or be subject to inefficient and uncooperative administration. Typical of this type of subversion of formal family-friendly policy is the following observation of a female respondent with pre-school dependents in a professional / technical occupation.

"Although the government allows a certain number of days for family illness, management really frowns on us using them so it makes us feel guilty. Why is the benefit available if it is so discouraged by our management?"
(The Alberta Government and the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, 1991)

From these examples there appears to be something happening between the structural corporate benefits that are offered and what is perceived by the employees as being offered. To illustrate, a significant proportion of US firms believe the family / employee assistance provision of 'flextime' can meet their needs (Christensen & Staines, 1990) and yet at the same time, it has been stated that 'other factors' need to accompany flextime before it is truly perceived by employees as being beneficial. From an employee's point of view, flexible work scheduling in and of itself is not sufficient to reduce work-family conflict

(Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981). This discrepancy of view between employers and employees is also consistent with the findings of a recent study by Duxbury and Higgins (1992) in which it was found that flexible work arrangements in combination with a supportive manager were the most important factors cited which helped women balance the dual responsibilities of work and family. Evidence also indicates that a supportive supervisor moderates work-family stress levels for both men and women (Hughes & Galinsky, 1988) and, in fact, it has been proposed that having a supportive supervisor may be equivalent to having a supportive spouse in terms of its effect on stress (National Council for Jewish Women, 1988). Equating supportive supervisors with supportive personal social support systems (i.e. spouses) is significant as many researchers (Gaddy, Glass & Arnkoff, 1983; Gray & Merill, 1983; Orthner & Pittman, 1986; and Rudd & McKenry, 1986) have found supportive family and friends to reduce work stress. Therefore, it might be proposed that a supportive supervisor may do the same.

Friedman (1987) concurs that an important element in the establishment of family benefits is the people in upper management. These people can strengthen the programs when they believe that work places should not create difficulties for employees in fulfilling their family responsibilities (Aldous, 1990). Companies that are viewed as being people oriented with a corporate culture stressing creativity, individualism and responsiveness are generally those which have a history of progressiveness and innovation in its human resource policies. Responsiveness to employees generally - and to the personal needs of a diverse labour force - has definitely played a role. As a result, family responsiveness has been an unexpected by-product of some company policies, as has been the even more important discovery that responsiveness, including responsiveness to the personal and / or familial needs and wants of employees, does not necessarily require spending more money.

At this time notions of family related employee assistance provisions are strictly limited to formal structural programs and policies which do not account for the environment in which they are placed. It should be noted, however, that the Ontario Women's Directorate

(1991C) suggests that a valuable contribution to any work environment is an open environment that is supportive for employees. This type of open and supportive environment is also alluded to in MacBride-King and Paris (1989). It is reasonable to assume that supportive structural or formal provisions in a hostile or non-supportive environment would not be perceived as being supportive at all. To illustrate the impact of the work environment, a study by Hrebiniak (1974) found that hospital staff who perceived their organizational environment as "benign, cooperative, or consistent" had a greater likelihood of continued employment in the organization (behavioural commitment). In addition, evidence also indicates that there are detrimental stress effects for an employee with non-supportive managers / organizations (Bean, 1989; Lips, 1988; Alpert & Culbertson, 1987, and Orthner & Pittman, 1986). The work environment in which family / employee assistance provisions are placed may, then, be an important determinant of their success or failure.

In the business and organizational literature there is a construct called 'perceived organizational support'. In 1986, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, and Sowa suggested that the perception of organizational support could be an antecedent of organizational commitment and they offered a measure of perceived employer commitment which they called the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). A social exchange view was used to explain the relationship between these two kinds of commitment.

Eisenberger et al. (1986) state, "employees develop global beliefs concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being" (p.501). Whereas measures of affective organizational commitment and behavioural organizational commitment tend to focus on employees' attitudes toward their organization and their intentions to stay or leave (e.g., "I do not feel a strong sense of belonging to my organization" and "It would not be too costly for me to leave my organization now"), the SPOS focuses on the employee's perceptions of the organization's attitude toward them

(e.g., "The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me"). Research shows that perceived organizational support is significantly associated with both affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger, Fasolo, & Davis-LaMastro, 1990).

Perceived organizational support is speculated to be a factor which can influence an employee's interpretation of organizational motives underlying any employee treatment. Although the construct of perceived organizational support is rarely seen in the literature pertaining to the work family interface, it is important to note that the interpretation of organizational motives underlying structural organizational family support is part of Bowen's model (1988). Here the reciprocal effects of work on family and family on work are speculated by Bowen to be moderated by an individual's personal perceptions.

In Bowen's model (Figure 4) these perceptions include an employee's expectations and beliefs about both the corporation's responsibility to offer family / employee assistance provisions as well as their interpreted motives for doing so. The fact that employees do have expectations of their employers implies that there are preconceived notions of what an employee expects of their organization. These expectations pertain to a wide variety of possible employee circumstances including the organization's reaction to future illness, mistakes, superior performance, to make the employee's job meaningful and interesting and the organization's desire to pay a fair salary. With regard to paying what is perceived to be a fair salary, Patchen (1960) investigated absenteeism by non supervisory workers in an oil company that emphasized to its employees the importance of a high level of job attendance. He noted that the employees' current level of pay showed little relation to absenteeism but that the perceived fairness of the pay correlated negatively with absenteeism. This suggests that employee perceptions may play a larger role in determining organizational outcomes than what might be typically expected. Similar to Patchen's study, Cook and Wall (1980), using a large and diverse sample of British blue-collar workers, found that trust in management to treat employees fairly was positively

correlated with the three separate measures of identification, involvement, and loyalty. Identification, involvement and loyalty have all been found to be precursors of an emotional tie to an organization, or affective attachment, and all three of these stem from individual perceptions.

Perceived organizational support has also been equated with the met employee need for praise and approval. Hutchinson and Sowa (1986) propose that employees will incorporate organizational membership into their self-identity and develop a positive emotional bond (affective attachment) to the organization if they perceive that the organization supports them. Buchanan (1974) too, found that the affective attachment of managers in business and government was positively related to beliefs that the organization recognized their contributions and could be depended on to fulfill promises.

Finally, perceived organizational support revolves around the concept of reciprocity in two ways (Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986). First, it has been postulated that there is a reciprocal process involved with employee inferences concerning the organization's commitment to them, and then the commitment the employees give back to the organization. Second, it has been proposed that the perception of organizational support could raise an employee's expectancy that the organization would reward greater effort toward meeting organizational goals. These speculations are consistent with the view that perceived organizational support strengthens employees' effort-outcome expectancy and affective attachment to the organization, resulting in greater efforts to fulfill the organization's goals (Hutchinson and Sowa, 1986). The proposed reciprocated outcome is a strengthening of employees' effort-outcome expectancy and affective attachment to the organization.

In essence, the confusing situation that occurs when an employer / organization offers some form of family supportive provisions and either employees don't use them or the employer realizes no business return from having them may be explained and verified with the measurement of perceived organizational support. Do parent and non-parent employees

push for these family responsive corporate benefits but then fail to use them because the environment in which they are placed is hostile and perceived as non-supportive? Is the mere availability of structural family benefits enough to increase an employee's affective attachment and behavioural commitment to their organization? Are employers expecting positive business returns from family / employee assistance provisions they deem to be supportive when the employees do not perceive them to be? Perceived organizational support may be one fundamental factor that is interfering with the relationship between structural family sensitive organizational inputs and the organization's recruitment and retention outcomes.

Conclusion

The factors which influence an employee's organizational commitment are important pieces of information for an employer. Being better able to predict and control the recruitment and retention of employees has direct bottom line implications. It is generally assumed that employers who offer family supportive provisions which help their employees with their dependent care responsibilities, allow their employees to use alternative working arrangements and offer their employees benefits which can enhance their physical and emotional health will result in positive outcomes for the organization. The assumption behind this is that there is a translation of organizational structural properties directly into psychological and behavioural responses. Empirical evidence suggests, however, that this connection may not be direct.

For the purposes of this research, it is suggested that the research on the work-family interface and employer offered family related employee assistance provisions has yielded inconsistent results due to a failure to acknowledge variations in employee perceptions of the support they are receiving from their organization. Inconsistent evidence with regard to family related employee assistance provisions is attributed to the lack of sensitivity to the work environment in which they are placed and to the neglect of the perception of

organizational support as a moderating variable. In essence, it is suspected that work related outcomes resulting from employer offered family sensitive provisions have been "washed out" due to widely varying reactions among employees with different perceptions of organizational support.

To date, perceived organizational support has rarely been studied in the literature pertaining to family / employee assistance provisions, has never been included as a family responsive provision in and of itself and has never been posed as the intervening factor or moderating variable that might influence the link between the organizational inputs of family / employee assistance provisions and organizational outcomes that can address the recruitment and retaining pressure Canada will soon face.

METHODS

Sampling Methods

Sampling Unit and Region

The primary sampling unit for this study was the Edmonton base of a large federal crown corporation employing over 32 000 employees across Canada. Within the infrastructure of the organization there are four major occupational categories: senior management, middle management, union, and non-union employees. With respect to the union employees, there are 12 separate collective agreements operating within the organization. There are observable differences in the family related employee assistance provisions offered to the employees in these four major occupational categories. However, those employed under collective agreements share the same family responsive benefits and provisions.

A Human Resource Manager of this organization was approached with information about the proposed research and he was invited to have the Edmonton based employees of

his organization participate in the study. The researcher ensured that general results could be given back to the organization to be used by professionals in the Human Resource and Employment Equity Departments so the work and family lives of the organization's employees could be better understood. The Human Resource Manager proposed the research to the Senior Vice President of the organization. The Senior Vice President requested that two pilot tests be conducted before the organization would agree to participate; if the employee response to the questionnaire was positive, he would forward the proposal to the President of the corporation. After the two pilot tests and a positive response of participants, the President of the corporation agreed to let the organization participate on a broader scale within the Edmonton region. A middle manager employed by this organization was assigned by the Senior Vice President to assist the researcher with the data collection. Data was collected at fourteen different work sites in the Edmonton region.

In this research a disproportionate stratified sample design was followed roughly in order to ensure that members of the occupational subcategories of senior management, middle management, union and non-union workers were all surveyed. Although the final sample did not represent the actual proportion of employees in each of these occupational categories, there were enough participants in each category for all categories to be adequately represented. In addition to occupational category, it was also important to obtain separate estimates for male and female employees. Because the geographical region of the organization that was participating has far more male employees than female employees (86.5% male and 13.5% female), the over sampling of women was necessary. The over sampling to obtain additional female respondents was achieved via convenience sampling. A self-report questionnaire was the medium used to collect the research data. The sample composition will be described in the Results section.

The Questionnaire

To create the questionnaire, Dillman's (1978) guidelines were used. Questionnaire items were first pilot tested on 9 employees working for a social service agency in the Edmonton area. Responses were not coded but valuable information was gained about the reading and comprehension level needed and the amount of time it took to complete the task. Revisions were then made regarding the questionnaire format and some of the wording. A second day of pilot testing took place and 44 questionnaires were administered at two separate work sites of the participating organization. Opportunities were given for these pilot respondents to express concerns / frustrations with some of the questionnaire items and revisions to the questionnaire were made once again from the feedback received. (As only small changes were made to the questionnaire layout and questionnaire instructions, and since the individual questionnaire items did not change, the responses gathered from the pilot study at the organization of interest were included in the analyses.)

The final draft of the questionnaire appears in Appendix A. It consisted of 80 closed-ended questions with ordered choices (four Likert and Likert-like attitudinal scales) and three closed-ended questions about the availability, use, and importance of, 13 separate employer offered benefits. Twelve demographic questions were included at the end of the questionnaire to gain information on the living arrangements and family situations of employees.

A graphic designer was hired to do a professional layout of the questionnaire. The University of Alberta name and logo was used throughout the document to reinforce to the participants that the research was primarily for off-worksite purposes.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the questionnaires were administered, permission was granted by the organization's President and by the ethics committee of the merged faculties of Agriculture & Forestry and Home Economics at the University of Alberta. In addition, letters were

written to 18 union representatives who represented Alberta District employees in order to inform them that a "Balancing Work and Family" questionnaire would be circulating among some of their union members. These union representatives were contacted as a courtesy since both "benefit" and "work arrangement" questions were part of the survey; a copy of the questionnaire was enclosed with each letter. (The letter to union representatives appears in Appendix B.)

As an incentive to complete the questionnaire, participants were given a chance to win one of four dinners for two at local restaurants. All four participating restaurants donated "dinner for two" gift certificates ranging in value from $50 to $85 dollars in return for the advertising that they would receive from the professionally designed postings that were placed around the work sites encouraging employees to participate in the survey. The draw form was inserted in the back of each questionnaire booklet and once the questionnaires were complete, they were returned to the researcher in a box separate from the questionnaires.

The researcher and a middle manager from the organization who was assigned to assist with the data collection drove to the various work sites and offices in the Edmonton region to administer the questionnaire over a three week period. The response rate for the questionnaire was very high. Three hundred and sixty five questionnaires were distributed and 314 were completed by the cut-off date, an overall response rate of 86%. (An additional 23 questionnaires were retrieved after the cut-off date indicating an even higher response rate but these were not included in the analyses due to time constraints.)

The majority of questionnaires (n=271) were administered in the following standardized procedure. Employees and supervisors were notified of the questionnaire distribution via E-Mail messages. They then gathered in the corporate meeting rooms or lunch rooms at their particular worksite at the specified time. Questionnaires were given to the employees by the researcher and they were completed on work time. The questionnaire was administered after a short oral introduction and description of the study by the

researcher. A standardized set of written instructions were provided. Participants were ensured both orally and in writing of their anonymity and the organization's access to only general results. Participants randomly placed their questionnaires in a plastic drum at the door once they were completed and when all participants completed the task the drum was retrieved by the investigator. It took participants an average of 23 minutes to complete the questionnaire. Some finished in 15 minutes but a few who had trouble reading, or problems with the English language, took up to 45 minutes to complete the task. For the questionnaires administered in this standardized way (n=271), grouped audiences were captive and therefore the problem of non-response bias was generally avoided. The only major drawback realized from this method of data collection was that a few employees were illiterate (n=~3) and these individuals might have been embarrassed in front of their co-workers when they decided not to volunteer.

Four of the letters that were sent to union representatives were returned unopened-opened with "moved" written on the envelope. Seven of the remaining 11 mailed surveys were completed and returned with the participant paying for their own postage. Mailed responses had an overall return rate of 64%.

After the majority of the questionnaires were completed, the responses were tallied and it was discovered that more female respondents were needed in order to conduct a separate analysis for gender. To obtain a greater number of female respondents, a convenience sampling method was used to recruit an additional 36 respondents. This subsequent data collection procedure entailed having the assisting Middle Manager distribute the questionnaires with a "University of Alberta" envelope to seal the questionnaire in and they were picked up at the work place three days later.

Operational Definitions of Variables

Criterion Variables (Dependent Variables)

Affective Organizational Attachment: The Organizational Commitment Questionnaire

Porter and his colleagues developed the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) and this was presented and reviewed in Mowday, Steers & Porter (1979). This instrument defines commitment in terms of an attitude of organizational affect. (This instrument appears on pages 6 and 7, questions 1 through 15 in the questionnaire in Appendix A.; some items were reverse scored.)

When the instrument was being developed, organizational commitment was defined as the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, a particular organization. It was characterized by three major factors: 1) a strong belief in and acceptance of the organization's goals and values; 2) a willingness to exert considerable effort on behalf of the organization; and 3) a strong desire to maintain membership in the organization. From this definition, it is clear that the employee's affective organizational commitment involves an active relationship with the organization.

Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) examine the psychometric properties of the OCQ instrument. Based on a series of studies among 2 563 employees working in a wide variety of jobs in nine divergent organizations, internal consistency reliabilities, homogeneity, and satisfactory test-retest reliabilities were found. In addition, cross-validated evidence of acceptable levels of predictive and discriminant validity emerged for the instrument.

Estimates of internal consistency were calculated in three different work places. Coefficient alpha is consistently high, ranging from .82 to .93 with a median of .90. These results compare favourably with most attitude measures (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

In addition, each item was positively correlated with the total score for the OCQ, with a range of average correlations of .36 to .72 and a median correlation of .64. These results suggest the 15 items of the OCQ are relatively homogeneous with respect to the underlying

attitude construct measured (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). In addition, factor analyses generally resulted in a single factor solution and support the previously stated conclusion that the items are homogeneous (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

In order to examine the stability of the OCQ over time, test-retest reliabilities were computed for two samples for which multiple data points were available. Test-retest reliabilities ranged from $r = .53$, to .75 over 2-, 3-, and 4-month periods. These data compare favourably to other attitude measures (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

In order to investigate the discriminant validity of the OCQ, it was compared to three other attitude measures: job involvement, career satisfaction, and job satisfaction. First, relationships between organizational commitment and Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) job involvement measure ranged from $r = .30$ to $r = .56$ across four samples (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Second, correlations between organizational commitment and a three-item measure of career satisfaction developed by Steers and Braunstein (1976) were .39 and .40 for two samples (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Finally, across five studies and 37 data points, correlations between organizational commitment and scales of the Job Descriptive Index ranged from .01 to .68, with a median correlation of .41 (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

In view of the typically high correlations found between various job attitudes measured at the same point in time, these correlations are sufficiently low as to provide some indication of an acceptable level of discriminant validity. The percentage of common variance shared by organizational commitment and the other measures did not exceed 50 per cent and was generally less than 25 per cent for most relationships. The magnitude of these correlations, however, are clearly higher than might be desired to demonstrate conclusively discriminant validity, but as previously mentioned, work related constructs generally have problems with overlap.

Finally, predictive validity is evident. The theory underlying the affective attachment construct suggests that highly committed employees will be less likely to leave their jobs

and may, under some circumstances, perform at higher levels than their less committed counterparts. The predictive power of the OCQ vis-a-vis subsequent voluntary turnover has been examined in several studies, including one study conducted independently by Hom, Katerberg and Hulin (1978) which used a measure of actual re-enlistment among part-time military personnel (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Across 9 data points, 8 significant correlations between commitment and turnover were found. The ninth data point, where commitment was measured during the initial employment stage, was not expected to be significant (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Hence, evidence for a consistent inverse affective attachment-turnover relationship emerges.

The response format for the 15 item scale uses a 7-point Likert scale, 1 being strongly agree, 7 being strongly disagree. When summed, the score may range between 15 and 105.

Behavioural Organizational Commitment: The Continuance Commitment Scale

The Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) was developed in Meyer and Allen (1984) and can be found in Allen and Meyer (1990). This instrument is reflected in questions 1 through 8 on page 10 of the questionnaire (Appendix A; some items were reverse scored). Becker (1960) described commitment generally as a disposition to engage in "consistent lines of activity" (p.33) and this is consistent with the description of Meyer and Allen (1984) which is based on the individual's recognition of the 'costs' associated with discontinuing the activity. According to them, it is the threat of loss that commits a person to an organization. This type of commitment can be identified as behavioural or continuance commitment and is generally believed to develop along an "economic rationale" (Meyer and Allen, 1984). Kanter (1968) also defined 'cognitive-continuance commitment' as that which occurs when there is a 'profit associated with continued participation and a "cost" associated with leaving' (p. 504). This type of commitment is in contrast to

affective attachment which does not delve into the behavioural intentions to stay or leave but rather, investigates the affective responses to one's organization.

The Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) is an 8-item measure which assesses the extent to which employees feel committed to their organizations by virtue of the costs that they feel are associated with leaving (i.e. investments and/or lack of attractive alternatives). It was found, in a previous sample, to have acceptable reliability (coefficient alpha = .77). Moreover, it was found not to be correlated with the affective measure of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) by Porter and his associates (r = -.06). The measure uses a 7-point response format, 1 being strongly disagree , 7 being strongly agree, and when summed, scores may range between 8 and 56 with higher scores indicating a higher behavioural commitment to the organization.

Predictor Variables (Independent Variables)

Family Related Employee Assistance Packages

"Benefit availability" was measured by asking participants about their knowledge of thirteen individual benefits or working arrangements that their employer offered. Included in this list were: flexible working hours, legitimate paid leaves to care for dependents, part-time work options, job sharing options, work at home options, relocation information and assistance for those transferring, personal and / or family counseling, financial counseling upon separating / resigning, on-site fitness facilities, on-site child care facilities, the option of selecting / coordinating benefits with partners or spouses, unpaid child care leaves up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent, and maternity leave salary top up (see Appendix A, questions 1 - 13, questionnaire pages 11 - 17). In addition to "benefit availability", a question pertaining to the "importance" employees placed on each of the 13 benefits was also posed. An example of this question is, "How important is/would an on-site child care facility be to you?" (on a scale from 1 - 5 ranging from 'not important' to 'very important'). Indicators of each of the benefit's importance was used to create

independent "benefit categories" since thirteen predictor variables (individual F/EAPs) and 13 interaction variables (individual F/EAPs x perceived organizational support) seemed cumbersome for the planned analysis. By factor analyzing the participants' "importance values", three distinct family related employee assistance provision "packages" emerged. These were F/EAP 1 (family / dependent care assistance package), F/EAP 2 (alternative working arrangements package), and F/EAP 3 (physical and emotional health package). By creating benefit categories (or packages), the thirteen individual benefits were reduced into three parsimonious sets of predictive factors.

There is confidence that the factored items do indeed measure the same trait as the extracted factors also made good conceptual sense as subconstructs. They were very similar to those described in the previous literature review and within each factor the individual benefits appear to support the same sort of work / family balancing activity. The "benefit package" factors resulting from the factor analysis are described in more detail in Table 1. The perceived availability of benefits within each "benefit package" are illustrated in Figures 6, 7 and 8.

Table 1

Subconstructs of Family Related Employee Assistance Packages

	factor transformation matrix values
F/EAP 1:	
"Family / Dependent Care Assistance Package"	
-on-site child care facilities	(.81481)
-the option of selecting / coordinating benefits with partners or spouses	(.56204)
-unpaid child care leaves up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent	(.83999)
-maternity leave salary top up	(.80343)

Table 1 (Continued...)

Subconstructs of Family Related Employee Assistance Packages

	factor transformation matrix values
F/EAP 2:	
"Alternative Working Arrangements Package"	
-flexible working hours	(.62693)
-part-time work options	(.72775)
-job sharing options	(.76080)
-work at home options	(.74280)

	factor transformation matrix values
F/EAP 3:	
"Physical and Emotional Health Package"	
-personal and / or family counseling	(.58859)
-financial counseling upon separating / resigning	(.75987)
-on-site fitness facilities	(.71515)

Legitimate paid leaves to care for dependents and relocation information and assistance for those transferring were two benefits that did not factor load on to any of the three factors previously outlined. These benefits were assumed to be "unique" benefits and were therefore deleted from the analysis.

The Perception of Organizational Support

It is believed that employees develop a global belief concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well being. This predictor variable is measured with the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). This

instrument is reflected in questions 1 through 36 on pages 7 to 10 of the questionnaire (see Appendix A; some items were reverse scored) and was found in Hutchinson and Sowa, (1986).

The SPOS has been demonstrated to have construct validity. The SPOS was compared with the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979) and the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS; Meyer & Allen, 1984). Overall SPOS was found to be both empirically distinct, as well as conceptually distinct, from affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment. Thus it is suggested that employees are able to distinguish their own commitment levels to the organization from their perceptions of the organization's commitment to them.

The 36 items in this instrument are measured on a 7-point response format, 1 being strongly disagree, 7 being strongly agree. When summed, scores may range between 36 and 252 with higher scores indicating a higher level of perceived organizational support.

Control Variables

Several factors needed to be controlled in the planned analyses. These included: the presence of aged and/or handicapped family members, the number of children one has under the age of 6 years old, the number of children one has between 6 and 19 years old, gross family income, total years of service with the organization, whether one has left the organization at one time and then returned at a later date and occupational category. The rationale for controlling for these variables follows.

First, because the benefits analyzed were referred to as being 'family responsive' or 'family related' it was necessary to control for the participant's dependent care responsibilities. These included aged parents, handicapped family members and children under 19 years of age. Second, gross family income was held controlled for as it was assumed that employer offered family responsive benefits would be more valuable for those who were managing with lower family incomes and may not have the disposable

income to pay for the benefits or services they require independently. Also, changes in pay have been shown to affect one's intent to stay with or leave an organization so behavioural commitment may be affected by an employee's income (Ritzer & Trice, 1969; Hrebiniak & Alutto, 1972). Third, tenure, or years of service with the organization, has also been shown to affect organizational commitments and so must be controlled. For example, positive relationships were found between behavioural organizational commitment and tenure in Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979), Meyer and Allen, (1984) and in Pittman and Orthner (1989). Fourth, whether an employee has left and then returned to an organization has also been controlled as it was assumed that those who have left their employer at one time would find it less risky to do so again and that the people who leave their work either have employment options elsewhere or have greater commitments outside of their organization. Finally, because there were four occupational categories / hierarchies within the participating organization, there were variations in the employer offered F/EAPs available to the employees. It was also anticipated that there would be differences in an employee's perception of organizational support according to one's work conditions and one's operating supervisor; this is why variations need to be studied within the organization's infrastructure. Occupational category has also been shown to affect organizational commitments (notably the differences between senior management, middle management and general employees). For these reasons, occupational category was also treated as a control variable in the analysis.

OPERATIONAL HYPOTHESES

Operational Hypotheses 1 and 2

Recall that family problems are considered to be the most common of worker difficulties (Jankowski, Holtgraves & Gerstein, 1989), that stress, role strain, and role conflict are attributed to daycare conflicts (Mirabelli, 1990), and that employees with young

children, aging parents, and teenagers are thought to be most at risk of severe work-family stress (Voydanoff & Kelly, 1984). Recall also that the many women who leave the labour force do not leave because of pregnancy or childbearing but because of poor working conditions and a lack of adequate child care (Bean, 1989; Glass, 1988) and that role related stress for working women is negatively related to job, pay, work, co-worker, and supervision satisfaction (Chassie & Bhagat, 1980) and morale (Goode, 1960; Pleck, Staines & Lang, 1978). Although pregnancy is strongly associated with leaving the labour force (Bean, 1989; Glass, 1988), work place constraints such as lack of flexibility and inconvenient hours of work may be responsible for many job exits following childbirth. Remember too that men are increasingly turning down promotions and transfers to enable them to be more involved in their families (Chapman, 1987), that they are participating more in dependent care responsibilities (Ontario Women's Directorate, 1991C), and requesting more flexible work settings and arrangements.

1. A positive relationship between structural family related employee assistance provision packages and affective organizational attachment is expected. The more family related benefits employees perceive to be available to them, the greater their affective organizational attachment will be.

2. A positive relationship between structural family related employee assistance provision packages and behavioural organizational commitment is expected. The more family related benefits employees perceive to be available to them, the greater their behavioural organizational commitment will be.

Operational Hypotheses 3 and 4

Recall that a supportive supervisor moderates work-family stress levels for both men and women (Hughes & Galinsky, 1988) and that having a supportive supervisor has been compared to having a supportive spouse in terms of its effect on stress (National Council for Jewish Women, 1988). In addition, evidence also indicates that there are detrimental stress effects for an employee with non-supportive managers / organizations (Bean, 1989; Lips, 1988; Alpert & Culbertson, 1987, and Orthner & Pittman, 1986).

3. A positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective organizational attachment is expected. Employees with a high level of perceived support will have a greater affective organizational attachment.

4. A positive relationship between perceived organizational support and behavioural organizational commitment is expected. Employees with a high level of perceived support will have a greater behavioural organizational commitment.

Operational Hypotheses 5 and 6

Recall that flexible work arrangements in combination with a supportive manager are important factors when helping employees balance work and family, that an important element in the establishment of family benefits is the people in upper management (Friedman, 1987), and that the people in upper management can strengthen the organizations programs (Aldous, 1990). Finally, recall Kamerman and Kahn's (1987) case studies in which it was speculated that employees were not consistently informed of their benefits, were pressured not to use them, or were subject to inefficient and

uncooperative administration. It appears reasonable to assume that supportive structural provisions in a hostile or non-supportive environment would not be perceived as being supportive at all even though, as structural and formal policies, they are classified as being such.

A statistically significant interaction effect between the availability of structural family related employee assistance provision packages and perceived organizational support is expected. That is, the relationship between F/EAPs and affective attachment and behavioural commitment is expected to be enhanced by high perceived organizational support.

5. The relationship between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provision packages and affective organizational attachment is greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher.

6. The relationship between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provision packages and behavioural organizational commitment is greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher.

Gender differences

Although gender effects were not anticipated in the hypotheses and gender differences were not focused on in the literature review, the data was split into male and female respondents so gender differences could be investigated. By splitting the data, results could be discussed in greater detail for three specific reasons. First, it seemed interesting to question whether men and women would react differently to disparate benefit packages.

Second, results could be used to identify the benefits and provisions that appeal most to certain groups of employees. Employee Equity Departments then could use the "preferred benefit" information to appeal to the employees that the department is trying to target and recruit. And third, it was felt that gender specific results would help employers challenge the existing assumptions and biases they have about the men and women that work for them.

Data Analysis: Multiple Regression Analyses

Multiple regression was chosen as the method of data analysis to test the Moderating Perception model. In general, the goal of a correlational study is to understand both the patterns of relationships and the variances among variables. Multiple regression analysis goes one step further and uses correlations between dependent and independent variables to predict one from the other while holding the effect of other independent variables constant. Notice that the research questions for this study are worded in the following manner: "What is the relationship between family related employee assistance provision packages (F/EAP 1, F/EAP 2 and F/EAP 3) and behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitments?" and similarly, "What is the relationship between perceived organizational support (as measured by the SPOS) and behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitments?" and finally, "Does the perception of organizational support moderate the effect of the three distinct F/EAP packages on both behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitments?". These three research questions are posed to inquire into the patterns of relationships among variables rather than the cause and effect of variables.

Using multiple regression has served two broadly conceived purposes in this study. The first was to test the Moderating Perception model and to understand how constructs relate to each other (the relationship of benefits, the perception of organizational support, and the combination of benefits and perceived support with both attitudinal and behavioural commitment). It has been well documented that the literature pertaining to the work-family

interface lacks a theoretical framework that incorporates an employee's perceptions of the support they receive. Being able to enhance theory pertaining to the work family interface was a particular goal when designing this research. Second, in addition to being able to predict an employee's behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitment from the amount of support they perceive they have and the structural F/EAPs they are offered, multiple regression analysis was also used to detect how much variation in the criterion variables can be associated with variations in the predictor variable. This is valuable information for employers and has work place policy implications as the participating employer will be able to estimate some work related outcomes from their inputs. Multiple regression appeared to be an appropriate data analysis method to use given the research questions of interest.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to testing the proposed hypotheses, the sample size and sample composition are discussed followed by the assessment of the internal consistency and discriminant validity of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ), the Continuous Commitment Scale (CCS), and the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (SPOS). Regression results and gender differences are presented and discussed in the last section.

Sample Size and Composition

For standard multiple regression analysis, the bare minimum sample size would be to have 1 more observation than independent variables. According to Tabachnick and Fiddell (1989) however, the desirable sample size is to have 20 times more cases than independent variables. There were 16 independent variables in the analysis and 314 questionnaires

were analyzed. The sample size for this study (N=314) is more than sufficient according to these guidelines.

Of the 314 respondents, 4% were senior managers (senior managers comprise 4% of the total labour pool in the Edmonton region), 31% were middle managers (middle managers comprise 17% of the total labour pool in the Edmonton region), 14% were non-union employees (non-union employees comprise 2% of the total labour pool in the Edmonton region) and 51% were union employees (union employees comprise 77% of the total labour pool in the Edmonton region). The average age of respondents was 42 years old and the average number of years worked for this organization was 19 years, 23% of those surveyed had left this organization at one time and then returned at a later time, and all respondents were full-time employees. Seventy six per cent of respondents were male and 22% were female (2% didn't respond to this question).

With respect to family situations and living arrangements, 83% of the respondents were married, 73% have spouses who work with 52% of these working full-time. Eighty per cent of the employees surveyed have children, 17% with children under the age of 6 years old and 53% with children between the ages of 6 and 19. Sixty eight percent of the surveyed employees have children who live with them. Aside from child care responsibilities, 15% of respondents reported that there are aged parents or handicapped family members who are dependent upon them for support. Average gross family income of the people surveyed was $57,700.

For a composition of gender specific sample characteristics, see Table 2.

Table 2

Sample Composition Split by Gender

	Males	**Females**
	% (total)	**% (total)**
personal characteristics		
average age	(41)	(42)
income	($58 000)	($57 000)
family characteristics		
married or living common-law	85% (205)	74% (51)
not married	14% (33)	20% (14)
widowed	1% (2)	3% (2)
spouse / partner employed full-time	38% (91)	62% (43)
spouse / partner employed part-time	22% (52)	4% (3)
spouse / partner not employed	26% (63)	9% (6)
have children	81% (195)	77% (53)
have children under the age of 6	18% (44)	16% (11)
have children between 6 - 19	58% (139)	36% (25)
aged parents or handicapped family members	15% (35)	15% (10)

Table 2 (Continued...)

Sample Composition Split by Gender

	Males	**Females**
	% (total)	**% (total)**
employment characteristics		
senior management	5% (11)	1% (1)
middle management	33% (80)	20% (14)
union	47% (111)	67% (46)
non-union	15% (36)	12% (8)
returning employees	22% (53)	26% (18)
average tenure	(20)	(16)
N=	76% (240)	22% (69)

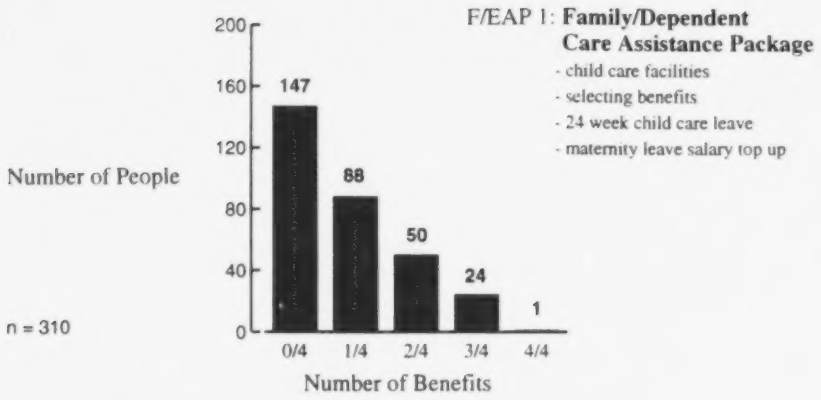

Figure 6. Perceived Availability of Benefits within the F/EAP 1 package

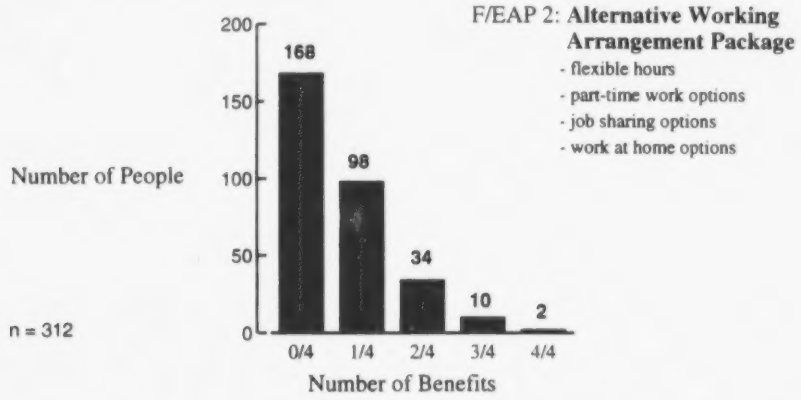

Figure 7. Perceived Availability of Benefits within the F/EAP 2 package

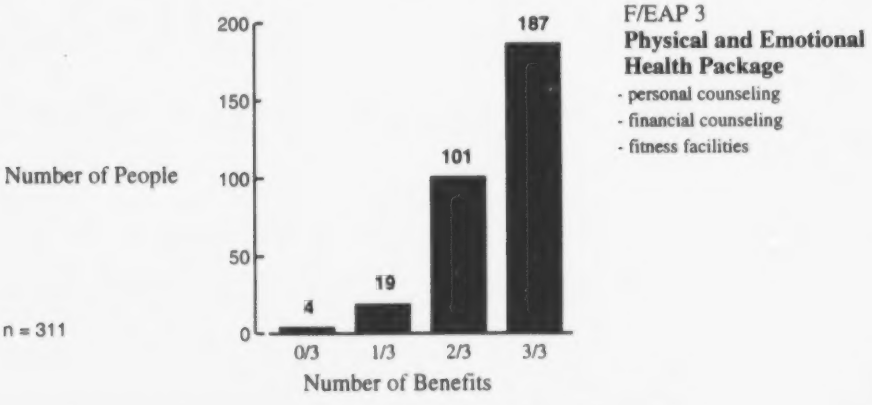

Figure 8. Perceived Availability of Benefits within the F/EAP 3 package

Internal Consistency

First, the internal consistency of each instrument was evaluated by conducting reliability analyses. Results of the reliability analyses can be seen in Table 3. Coefficient alpha was relatively high and generally consistent with the reviews on each that were previously described and they compare favourably with most attitude measures (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979).

Table 3

Instrument Reliability Coefficients

instrument	number of cases	number of items	alpha
OCQ	300	15	.8771
CCS	306	8	.7814
SPOS	294	36	.9512

Discriminant Validity

Second, bivariate correlations were performed to assess the discriminant validity of the instruments used. Instrument means and standard deviations are presented in Table 4 and results of Pearson's correlation coefficient and results of 2-tailed tests of significance are presented in Table 5.

Table 4

Instrument Means and Standard Deviations

instrument	number of cases	means	standard deviations
OCQ	311	74.52	15.93
CCS	313	42.53	9.54
SPOS	313	149.72	39.45

Table 5

Pearson's Correlation Coefficients

	CCS		SPOS		CCS
OCQ	.0371	OCQ	.6851	SPOS	-.0980
	P= .515		P= .000		P=.083

The magnitude of the correlations that emerged for this study are clearly higher than what would be desired to demonstrate conclusively discriminant validity, but as previously mentioned, work related constructs generally have problems with overlap (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979) and this is especially true when job attitudes are measured at the same point in time.

Regression Results

Affective Attachment

Referring first to the foremost column of Table 6, the hypothesized relationships flowing from the Moderating Perception Model (Figure 5) receive some empirical support. First, the model exhibits a "good fit" explaining 52% of the variance in the dependent variable (R Square value of .52). In addition the calculated F-value is statistically significant at the .0000 level.

Hypotheses with respect to a relationship between the perceived availability of family related employee assistance provision packages and affective attachment, perceived organizational support and affective attachment, and perceived organizational support moderating the relationship between the perceived availability of family supportive benefits and affective attachment have all been supported to some extent at significance levels below .05 .

First, support was shown for Hypothesis 1 which proposed that there would be a positive relationship between the believed availability of family related employee assistance provision packages (see Table 1 for full F/EAP package descriptions) and affective attachment to the organization. However, this relationship was evident only for the perceived availability of benefits associated with "physical and emotional health" (including personal and/or family counseling; financial counseling upon separating / resigning; and on-site fitness facilities). For every additional "physical and emotional health" benefit perceived to be available, attitudinal commitment scores were an average of 9.7 points higher.

Hypotheses with respect to a positive relationship between affective attachment and the perceived availability of "family dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) (including on-site child care facilities; the option of selecting / coordinating benefits with partners or spouses; unpaid child care leaves up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent; and maternity leave salary top up) and "alternative working arrangements" benefits (F/EAP 2) (including flexible working hours; part-time work options; job sharing options; and work at home options) were not supported. Studying the fundamental orientation behind the construct of affective organizational attachment (found in the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire [OCQ] and presented in Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979), an interpretation for the lack of statistically significant results with respect to these two benefits follows.

Affective attachment is the emotional attachment to, the enjoyment of having membership in, and the involvement in, an organization. Affective attachment is the strength of an individual's corporate identification and it extends beyond mere passive loyalty. Employees with a strong affective commitment remain with their organization because they "want to" and not because they "need to". At the participating organization, the benefits included in the F/EAP 3 "physical and emotional health" package are advertised well (e.g. the on-site fitness facility), and they seem to be a very "personal" sort of benefit.

Because of the personalized nature of the provisions, employees may tend to be more aware of their existence and they may be interpreted by employees as being "corporate extras" or benefits beyond what is commonly offered in other organizations. The perceived availability of these particular benefits may send the message to employees that their employer recognizes their "personal worth". It is possible that employees "want to" remain with organizations that offer them benefits or provisions that are seen as being "in addition to" the benefits or provisions employees come to take for granted or expect (e.g. medical or dental coverage) and that appear to be tailored to their own personal needs.

Second, support was shown for Hypothesis 3 which proposed that there would be a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and affective organizational attachment. Indeed, the indicator of perceived organizational support was significantly related to affective attachment with an average of a .44 point higher score on the Affective Attachment scale with every point increase in the perceived organizational support scale.

Third, partial support was shown for Hypothesis 5 which proposed that perceived organizational support would have a moderating effect on the relationship between family supportive packages and affective attachment and that the relationship between family related benefits and affective attachment would be greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher. Indeed, the perception of organizational support was found to moderate the relationship between the perceived availability of "physical and emotional health" benefits (F/EAP 3) and affective attachment. Yet it was found that the greater the perceived organizational support, the smaller in magnitude (by .06 units for every unit higher perceived organizational support score) was the relationship between the perceived availability of "physical and emotional health" benefits and affective attachment. Hypothesis 5 is supported in that perceived organizational support does moderate the relationship between family related benefits and affective attachment but in the opposite direction to that predicted. That is, the more supportive the organization is perceived to be,

the less effect the believed availability of "physical and emotional health" benefits has on affective organizational attachment.

Whether or not an employee had left the organization and then returned at a later time was shown to have a statistically significant negative relationship with affective organizational attachment. Participants who had exited and then re-entered employment with this organization scored an average 3.21 points lower on the affective attachment scale. This relationship seems logical as employees who have left the organization at one time likely had other obligations, commitments or priorities which over-rided their decision to stay employed with the organization. It is logical to assume then, that people who have exited and then re-entered employment with their organization would have a lesser attachment to it.

Table 6

Results of the Affective Attachment Regression

	Total Sample	**Males**	**Females**
Independent Variables	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)
perceived support (SPOS)	.44 (.00***)	.42 (.00***)	.57 (.00**)
F/EAP 1: "family dependent care assistance"	1.34 (.64)	.07 (.99)	6.34 (.36)
F/EAP 2: "alternative working arrangements"	-1.61 (.72)	.88 (.87)	-10.10 (.31)
F/EAP 3: "physical and emotional health	9.68 (.02*)	9.55 (.05*)	9.36 (.37)
interaction 1 (F/EAP 1 x SPOS)	-.00 (.90)	6.89 (.98)	-.03 (.46)
interaction 2 (F/EAP 2 x SPOS)	.01 (.80)	-.01 (.86)	.04 (.44)

Table 6 (Continued...)

Results of the Affective Attachment Regression

	Total Sample	**Males**	**Females**
Independent Variables	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)
interaction 3 (F/EAP 3 x SPOS)	-.06 (.04*)	-.06 (.11)	-.06 (.36)
aged and handicapped family members needing support	.12 (.92)	.36 (.79)	-2.09 (.39)
children under 6 years	.69 (.60)	.99 (.52)	1.15 (.70)
children between 6 and 19	1.16 (.09)	1.30 (.10)	1.87 (.26)
gross family income	-.05 (.26)	-.07 (.19)	.02 (.79)
total years with organization	.10 (.35)	.17 (.21)	.09 (.63)
organizational exit and return	-3.21 (.05*)	-2.68 (.17)	-7.70 (.03*)
middle management	-.14 (.97)	-.88 (.83)	-1.87 (.89)
non-union	.61 (.88)	-.31 (.95)	.65 (.96)
unionized	.44 (.91)	-.84 (.85)	.25 (.99)
R Square	.52	.49	.70
Adjusted R Square	.49	.45	.60
F	18.44	12.24	6.86
Signif F	.00***	.00***	.00***
N	289	225	64

*p< .05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

Affective Attachment Regression: Splitting the data to identify gender differences.

Regression results for the model involving the dependent variable of affective organizational attachment for men and women separately appear in the last two columns of Table 6. Splitting the data by gender resulted in changes in the explanatory power of the Affective Attachment Regression model. The explanatory power of the model for men decreased by 4% yet statistical performance remained high (p=.0000). In contrast, explanatory power of the model for women was higher than for the full sample. The R Square value increased by .18. Similar to the sample of men, statistical performance remained high for the female group of respondents (p=.0000).

Hypotheses with respect to the relationship between family related employee assistance benefits and affective attachment were supported only for male respondents. Like the combined sample, the believed availability of "personal and physical health" benefits (F/EAP 3) was significant for men at the .05 level -- with every additional "personal and physical health" benefit perceived to be available, attitudinal commitment scores were an average of 9.55 points higher. There was no statistically significant relationship between the perceived availability of "personal and physical health" benefits and attitudinal commitment for the women's sample. Perhaps the content of the "personal and physical health" benefit package are more relevant for the male employee. Specifically, men may tend to link the "personal and/or family counseling" benefit specifically to substance abuse counseling. At this particular organization, employees with a substance abuse problem can affect the safety of all other co-workers in the majority of positions that are occupied primarily by males. Benefits that can alleviate the job related risks associated with substance abuse problems in the workplace is likely a more relevant and valued provision for men than it is for the women at this particular organization. It is also possible that women tend to have a better support system via their friends and family for their emotional well being such that employer offered personal and/or family counseling may not be as important to women. Gray and Merill (1983), Orthner and Pittman (1986), and Rudd and

McKenry (1986) for example, found that supportive family and friends can reduce work stress. Second, the financial counseling upon separating / resigning benefit may appear to be more relevant to the male population at this organization than it is to women. Since 45% of the women in the sample were over the age of 45 and since 83% of the total sample were either married or living common-law, this particular cohort of women may leave more of the financial matters up to their male partners. Similarly, almost 33% of the male sample was over the age of 45, a cohort of men who may strongly relate to the role of being the "family breadwinner" or "family financial manager" so they may relate to and appreciate this benefit more. Finally, the on-site fitness facilities may be more important for the males in the sample than the females because the average age of women in the sample (42) was higher than the average age of men such that the women in the sample are more likely older than most fitness facility patrons. Also, women may tend to prefer fitness facilities that are not co-ed arrangements (which this particular on-site fitness facility was).

Second, Hypothesis 3 was supported for both males and females when the model was run by gender. Perceived organizational support was significantly related to affective attachment for both men and women with an average .42 point higher Affective Attachment score for every point higher score in the perceived support scale for men and a .57 point increase on the same scale for women.

Hypothesis 5, which proposed the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between the perceived availability of family supportive packages and affective attachment, was not supported for men or women.

Finally, although the percentage of women who exited and then returned to their organization exceeded males by only 5% (22% [n=53] of the exit/re-entry employees were male and 27% [n=18] were female) a statistically significant negative relationship with affective organizational attachment emerged only for the women in the sample. Women who had exited and then re-entered employment with this organization scored an average 7.7 points lower on their affective attachment scale.

Behavioural Commitment

For the full sample, hypotheses with respect to the relationships between family related employee assistance provision packages and behavioural organizational commitment and the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between the perceived availability of family supportive benefits and behavioural organizational commitment were both supported. However, the hypothesis predicting a positive relationship between perceived organizational support and behavioural organizational commitment was not supported.

First, support was shown for Hypothesis 2 which proposed that there would be a positive relationship between the believed availability of family related employee assistance provision packages and behavioural commitment to the organization. However, this relationship was evident only for the perceived availability of "family dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1). This particular package includes on-site child care facilities, the option of selecting / coordinating benefits with partners or spouses, unpaid child care leaves up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent, and maternity leave salary top up. With every additional "family dependent care assistance" benefit perceived to be available, behavioural commitment scores were an average of 7.52 points higher.

The hypothesized positive relationships between behavioural organizational commitment and the perceived availability of "alternative working arrangements" benefits (F/EAP 2) (which include flexible working hours; part-time work options; job sharing options; and work at home options) and "physical / emotional health" benefits (F/EAP 3) (which include personal / family counseling, financial counseling upon separation, and a on-site fitness facility) were not supported. Based on the fundamental theory behind the construct of continuous organizational commitment in the Continuance Commitment Scale (CCS) found in Allen and Meyer (1990), an interpretation of the non-significant results follows.

Behavioural or continuous organizational commitment is generally a disposition to engage in "consistent lines of activity" which are based on an individual's recognition of the "profits" associated with continued employment at the organization and the "costs" associated with leaving the organization. According to this economic rationale, it is the threat of loss that commits a person to an organization. Employees with a strong continuous commitment remain with their organization because they "need to" and not necessarily because they "want to". At the participating organization, the significant relationship involving the benefits included in the "family dependent care assistance" package (F/EAP 1) are all provisions which would enable and encourage employees to remain employed even if they had an addition to their family. This reinforces the observation in the literature review that many women who leave the labour force do not do so because of pregnancy or childbearing but because of poor working conditions and a lack of adequate child care. It appears that employees may make an economic choice to remain with their organization if it offers them benefits or provisions which help them better manage their roles as both employees and caregivers. On the other hand, the perceived availability of "alternative working arrangement" benefits (F/EAP 2) and "physical and emotional health" benefits (F/EAP 3) may be important to some individual employees but they do not have the statistically significant relationship that was predicted for the sample on average.

Third, partial support was shown for Hypothesis 6 which proposed that perceived organizational support would have a moderating effect on the relationship between family supportive packages and behavioural organizational commitment and that the relationship between family related benefits and behavioural commitment would be greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher. Indeed, perceived organizational support was found to moderate the relationship between the perceived availability of "family / dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) and continuous commitment. Yet it was found that the greater the perceived organizational support, the smaller in magnitude was

the relationship between the perceived availability of "family / dependent care assistance" benefits and continuous commitment. With every unit increase in the perceived organizational support scale, the relationship between "family / dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) and continuous commitment scores was .04 units smaller. Hypothesis 6 is supported in that perceived organizational support does moderate the relationship between of family related benefits and behavioural commitment but in opposite direction to the one predicted. That is, the more supportive the organization is perceived to be, the less effect the believed availability of "family / dependent care assistance" benefits have on behavioural organizational commitment.

Similar to results from the Affective Attachment model, whether or not an employee had left the organization and then returned at a later time was also shown to have a statistically significant negative relationship with behavioural organizational commitment. Participants who had exited and then re-entered employment with this organization scored an average 2.66 points lower on their continuous commitment scale. As with affective attachment, employees who have left the organization at one time likely had other obligations, commitments or priorities which over-rode their decision to stay employed with the organization. It may also be that returning employees have a less vested interest in continuous employment if they have already lost their seniority or pension contributions from the first time they exited. It appears likely that people who have exited and then re-entered employment with their organization would have a lesser commitment to it.

Occupational category also has a statistically significantly relationship with behavioural organizational commitment. Those in senior management positions are the least behaviourally committed members of this organization. Compared to senior managers, middle management respondents averaged of 7.53 points higher, union workers averaged 10.06 points higher, and non-union employees averaged 8.20 points higher on the continuous commitment scale. In the past, employees in senior management positions at this organization were vulnerable to the organization's downsizing efforts. The knowledge

of this fact could have affected the behavioural intentions of the senior manager respondents since they may be continually preparing themselves for an early retirement incentive or a job change. Another plausible explanation for this finding is that senior managers may feel that their skills are transferable and that they would be desirable employees at other organizations. They may feel that the lack of employment alternatives in the recessionary period does not affect them the same way that it would an employee in another occupational category. Their perception may be that employment alternatives are more available and therefore they may not feel they "need to" remain employed at this organization as much as the middle managers, union and non-union workers do.

Table 7

Results of the Continuous Commitment Regression

	Total Sample	**Males**	**Females**
Independent Variables	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)
perceived support (SPOS)	.07 (.25)	.06 (.42)	-.07 (.67)
F/EAP 1: "family dependent care assistance"	7.52 (.00***)	9.58 (.01*)	1.83 (.77)
F/EAP 2: "alternative working arrangements"	-4.92 (.17)	-9.91 (.02*)	18.67 (.04*)
F/EAP 3: "physical and emotional health	.71 (.82)	.21 (.95)	-13.01 (.18)
interaction 1 (F/EAP 1 x SPOS)	-.04 (.00**)	-.06 (.01*)	-.01 (.77)
interaction 2 (F/EAP 2 x SPOS)	.02 (.29)	.05 (.04*)	-.10 (.04*)

Table 7 (Continued...)

Results of the Continuous Commitment Regression

	Total Sample	**Males**	**Females**
Independent Variables	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)	Coefficient (Signif. of t)
interaction 3 (F/EAP 3 x SPOS)	-.01 (.55)	-.02 (.56)	.08 (.21)
aged and handicapped family members needing support	-.28 (.76)	-.42 (.68)	-.32 (.88)
children under 6 years	1.25 (.22)	1.50 (.19)	-.09 (.97)
children between 6 and 19	.61 (.26)	.63 (.30)	-1.02 (.50)
gross family income	.01 (.75)	.04 (.37)	-.02 (.80)
total years with organization	.08 (.37)	.18 (.09)	-.13 (.47)
organizational exit and return	-2.66 (.04*)	-2.32 (.12)	-2.83 (.37)
middle management	7.53 (.01**)	7.10 (.02*)	29.94 (.01*)
non-union	8.21 (.01*)	7.53 (.03*)	33.54 (.01*)
unionized	10.06 (.00**)	8.97 (.01*)	37.47 (.00**)
R Square	.14	.14	.36
Adjusted R Square	.09	.08	.14
F	2.77	2.18	1.66
Signif F	.000***	.01**	.09
N	290	226	64

*p< .05. **p<.01. ***p<.001.

As shown in Table 7, the relationships hypothesized by the Moderating Perception Model receives some empirical support. However, the Continuous Commitment regression model has less explanatory power than the Affective Attachment regression model with only 14% of the variance in behavioural commitment scores explained (compared with the Affective Attachment model which explained 52% of the variance in affective attachment scores) yet statistical performance remained high (p=.0004).

It is likely that the Moderating Perception Model (Figure 5) had less explanatory power with behavioural organizational commitment as an outcome because of the recessionary period during which the questionnaire was completed. It is likely that, regardless of the supportive environment or family related benefits offered at this organization, there will be an overall perceived lack of employment alternatives. Due to the current high unemployment rate today it is logical that the decisions to stay with, or leave an organization would depend upon more than the supportive work environment or family related corporate benefits at this time.

Continuous Commitment Regression: Splitting the data to identify gender differences.

Results of regression analysis when the sample was split by gender appear in the last two columns of Table 7. The explanatory power of the Continuous Commitment regression model increased marginally (.04%) when the model was estimated for men only and statistical performance remained high (p= .01). However, the Continuous Commitment regression model did not achieve statistical significance when estimated for women only. The explanatory power of this model, specific to the women in the sample, and the relationships within will therefore not be discussed.

For men, the regression model for continuous commitment revealed very similar results to those found with the full data set with one major, surprising exception. Hypothesis 2 suggests that the perceived availability of F/EAP programs will be positively related to behavioural organizational commitment. Surprisingly, the perceived availability of

"alternative working arrangements" benefits (F/EAP 2) (including flexible working hours; part-time work options; job sharing options; and work at home options) was negatively related to behavioural organizational commitment at a statistically significant level (p=.02). For every additional "alternative working arrangement" that is believed to be available, behavioural commitment scores were an average of 9.91 points lower. This finding may make sense in the context of the composition of the sample and the corporate culture of the organization. For the most part, "alternative working arrangement" benefits are comprised of benefits and work options that are excluded from the majority of the collective agreements at this organization. Flexible work hours, part-time work options and job sharing were likely interpreted as being "soft" methods of downsizing and as a threat to job security. Alternatively, respondents may not be in a financial position to work less than their regular full-time hours; it may simply not be an option for some people at this time to earn less than they already do.

However, Hypothesis 2 was supported for men in that the perceived availability of "family dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) was positively related to behavioural commitment. For every additional "family dependent care assistance" benefit believed to be available, men's behavioural commitment scores were an average of 9.57 points higher.

Hypothesis 6, which proposed that perceived organizational support would have a moderating effect on the relationship between family supportive packages and behavioural organizational commitment was supported with respect to F/EAP 1 ("family / dependent care assistance" benefits) and F/EAP 2 ("alternative working arrangement" provisions). However, it was hypothesized that the relationship between family related benefits and behavioural organizational commitment would be greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher. This was evident only for "alternative work arrangement" benefits (F/EAP 2) for the men in the sample. The believed availability of "alternative work arrangement" benefits was associated with lower average scores on the continuous commitment scale (-9.91), and was greater in magnitude when perceived organizational

support was higher. With every point increase in the perceived organizational support scale, the relationship between "alternative work arrangement" benefits (F/EAP 2) and continuous commitment scores becomes .05 units greater. That is, the more supportive the organization is perceived to be, the more negative is the relationship between the believed availability of the F/EAP 2 benefits and continuous commitment.

Again, according to hypothesis 6, the relationship between family related benefits and behavioural organizational commitment would be greater in magnitude when perceived organizational support is higher. Indeed, the perception of organizational support was found to moderate the relationship between the perceived availability of "family dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) and behavioural commitment for males. Yet it was found that the greater the perceived organizational support, the smaller in magnitude was the relationship between the believed availability of "family / dependent care assistance" benefits and behavioural commitment. For the males in the sample, with every unit increase in the perceived organizational support scale, the relationship between "family / dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) and continuous commitment scores is .06 units lower. That is, the more supportive the organization is perceived to be, the less effect the perceived availability of the F/EAP 1 benefits has on continuous commitment for the males in this sample. Once again, hypothesis 6 is supported in that perceived organizational support does moderate the relationship between family related benefits and behavioural commitment but in the opposite direction to that predicted.

Again, a statistically significant relationship between occupational category and behavioural organizational commitment was found for males. Those males in senior management positions are the least behaviourally committed male members of this organization. Compared to senior managers, middle management respondents averaged of 7.10 points higher, union workers averaged 9.97 points higher, and non-union employees averaged 7.53 points higher on the continuous commitment scale. Again, because the senior managers have been affected by the organization's downsizing efforts, they may be

continually preparing themselves for early retirement or a job change. As previously described for the combined sample, the men in this sample may also feel that their skills are transferable and that they have more employment alternatives to choose from beyond this particular organization.

Limitations

Limitations of the Moderating Perception Model

The relative absence of reasonable alternative explanations is what gives a study internal validity. Because organizational support, the factors that affect employee decisions to remain with a given employer, and the loyalty one has to a particular organization are all dynamic, multidimensional, and complicated issues, it is difficult to identify all the conditions that contribute to the relationships. Although the majority of social science research has problems with internal validity, the Moderating Perception model may have been susceptible to unrecognized intervening variables that might have affected the relationships hypothesized and that should have been controlled for in the analyses. Although the Moderating Perception model was developed from previous studies that investigated the factors influencing organizational commitments, covert variables that could have been controlled in the regression might still have been overlooked. For example, it is likely that if a place of employment has a high rate of perceived organizational support and offers a variety of F/EAPs, still, other parts of the job such as a generous pension or an attractive work space may also influence affective attachments and behavioural commitments. Pension plans and work space aesthetics were not accounted for in this study. These two alternative explanations have been generated through common sense, however there are many other alternative explanations that could also intervene with the relationship. For example, the recessionary period we are experiencing is likely affecting the behavioural commitment or intent of people to stay with their organization. Recall that the explanatory power of the continuous commitment model was fairly weak (R Square

value of .14); although tenure, presence of dependents, occupation category and the like were controlled for, it is difficult to control for the effect of economic conditions like the recession in a cross-sectional design. If it were possible that this research could have followed an experimental design rather than a cross sectional design, the internal validity and the explanatory power of the models might have increased.

Limitations of the Sample

Because the sample is relatively homogeneous, there will likely be a lack of external validity and, therefore, generalizability of the study results. Although the study results may be generalizable to other employees within this organization and to similar industries (organizations for example, that are downsizing, have an older labour pool, a predominantly male labour force, have similar occupational positions and working conditions with a militaristic type of corporate culture) they will likely not be generalizable to a general population of employees.

Limitations of the Questionnaire

The general response to the survey was positive. People seemed interested in the topic area yet a few commented that they felt frustrated with the fact that several of the scale items appeared to be redundant. Some participants expressed the opinion that the questions were not ones they expected and a few were confused about why questions were asked pertaining to their organizational commitment when they thought the questionnaire would revolve only around "balancing work and family". In addition, the questionnaire was fairly long and it did take some commitment on the part of the people to complete the task.

The one questionnaire item that should have been presented differently was the item requesting the respondent's age. This question was phrased, "Please indicate your age... ___". Quite a few did not answer (n=21), or were hesitant to answer the age question (e.g. "in my 50s"). This question should gave been phrased differently and categorical response options should have been given.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

In summary, the empirical evidence herein which supports the Moderating Perception model has opened the door to a new understanding about the interface between work and family from an employer's perspective. The Moderating Perception model suggests the importance of both structural family support (family related benefits) and the perception of organizational support, it suggests that organizational commitment should be divided into attitudinal and behavioural subconstructs, and it hypothesizes both main and interaction effects of structural and perceived support on attitudinal and behavioural subconstructs of organizational commitment.

This research produced three major findings. First, there is support for the hypothesis that the perceived availability of some family related employee assistance provision packages is related to both attitudinal and behavioural organizational commitment. Second, there is strong evidence that the perception of organizational support is related to an attitudinal component of organizational commitment indicating that a generally supportive environment may be a "benefit" in and of itself. And third, there is evidence of an interaction effect between structural and perceived support.

From these three major findings, two implications are apparent. First, the findings can contribute to the enhancement of the existing theories pertaining to the work/family interface, and second, employers can use these results to begin estimating and predicting some work related outcomes from their inputs. Both of these implications will be discussed with greater emphasis on the latter since the fundamental purpose behind this research was to better understand the work/family interface from an employer's perspective.

First, with respect to enhancing theory, it has been well documented in the literature that the existing theoretical frameworks pertaining to the work-family interface do not incorporate what employees "perceives to be supportive". The Moderating Perception model incorporates employee perceptions of support. With the use of multiple regression

analyses, a better understanding of the relationships between the constructs of support and constructs of organizational outcomes was achieved. Enhancing theory was a goal for this particular piece of research and by successfully introducing "perception" as a moderating variable in the Moderating Perception model it may encourage others to do the same in both basic and applied research in the work / family arena.

The second implication, being able to estimate and predict work related outcomes from corporate inputs, was another goal of this piece of research. This outcome follows the recommendations of previous researchers (see for example, Orthner & Pittman, 1986) who suggested that there needs to be a demonstration of how employer costs associated with expanded family-oriented policies and practices can be balanced by gains to the corporate bottom line. Again, multiple regression analysis applied to the Moderating Perception model allows changes in the organizational outcome variables to be predicted from variations in available family related benefits and in the perception of organizational support.

Organizational commitments are important outcome variables to study for three major reasons. First, an employee's organizational commitment is more stable over time and is a more global indicator than most others. Job satisfaction, for example, tends to fluctuate with changes in an employee's job environment and can even change from day to day with small events. Organizational commitment is a more reliable indicator for employers wanting to assess their employees.

Second, organizational commitment is the single most important predictor of employee turnover. Turnover is of course associated with costs for selecting a new candidate, retraining, the organizational shuffle and short-term corporate disorganization, and a financial loss with respect to the investment in the departing employee in the form of his or her education, training and experience. At most organizations today, the costs associated with employee turnover have not been of particular concern since most are working toward downsizing their labour pool. When downsizing, positions are not refilled and therefore

the majority of the associated costs with hiring and training a new employee are not incurred. However , if Canadian organizations experience the skilled labour shortage that labour economists and demographic trend experts predict within the next twenty years, employee turnover will likely come to be a central concern for human resource professionals and employers sometime in the future.

Although commitment is an important predictor of turnover, it is important to acknowledge that the application of this construct has other powerful uses. For example, in the midst of retirement incentives and lay-offs there should be a corporate awareness of, and a differentiation between, functional and dysfunctional downsizing. Most organizations undergoing downsizing phases have neglected to study the work related behaviour and attitudes of the employees who remain with the organization after the cutbacks. Assessments of employee organizational commitment can help to identify psychological states and, from a human resource perspective, this is important because understanding what employees do on the job is generally in the long term, more important than whether they remain.

Employees vary with respect to their on-the-job attitudes and behaviours. The vast majority of corporate research done in the past concerning organizational commitment has focused on an employee's continuance commitment, or an employee's intention to stay with, or leave, an organization. Grossly neglected among human resource professionals are indicators which inform them of their employees' attitudinal commitment, or their affective attachment to the organization. There needs to be a distinction between the two measures of commitment because the implications stemming from these are very different.

Continuance commitment can be defined as an organizational commitment based on the costs which employees associate with leaving the organization. Employees with high ratings of behavioural organizational commitment will have profits associated with continued employment. This rating is generally affected by the magnitude and/or the number of investments an individual feels he/she had made with the organization and also

the perceived lack of employment alternatives. Due to the high unemployment rate it is logical that a high level of behavioural commitment was found in this study since there are fewer employment alternatives to choose from today. In general, employees with a strong continuance commitment remain with the organization because they feel they "need to".

Again, because of the high level of national unemployment, the lack of alternative jobs, and the major downsizing trend that is happening at most organizations, it is logical to assume that most employees, like the employees participating in this study, will generally have a great desire to remain employed at their organization. This is not necessarily profound and, on the surface, indices of continuance commitment may not necessarily appear useful to study at this time since the majority of employers and human resource managers are not at all concerned about retaining their labour force. However, what can be implied, and what can be profoundly useful to organizations from this research, is information that indicates which family supportive employee benefits affect employee decisions regarding whether they stay or leave their organization.

A scenario may make the above concept a little more explicit. It is well known that many employees are turning down promotions and transfers because of family obligations. Employers would not want to see their valuable employees offered other promotional transfers from different organizations that could make available family related benefits that would ensure an easy transition for accompanying family members (e.g. relocation assistance, helping the "towed" spouse find a job, easing the transition of youngsters into new schools, etc.). This is to say that, although there is an overall downsizing movement happening at most organizations, there remains a pressure to recruit and retain certain "star employees". Star employees will not be victim to the recession and to the lack of alternative jobs in the same way that other employees are simply because they are more marketable and will be seen as more valuable to other scouting employers. To remain competitive, employers and managers will need to ensure they have a healthy pool of "stars". From the results of this study it was apparent that the believed availability of the

family related benefits that helped employees with their dependent care responsibilities (on-site child care facilities, the option of selecting / coordinating benefits with partners or spouses, unpaid child care leaves up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent, and maternity leave salary top-up) was indeed related their behavioural commitment to the organization. For the employers at this organization, "family dependent care assistance" benefits may be instrumental for retaining their "stars" and in addition, may be useful for the people working in the Employment Equity Department. By identifying a population that an organization is targeting for equity reasons (i.e. women), and by examining the employee benefits and organizational support that most affect this groups' intentions to stay or leave, information can then be extrapolated to the general population. Employment Equity Departments can then target new employees and try to retain their current target employees by emphasizing, advertising, or enhancing the benefits or supports that are available, important and positively and significantly related to their behavioural organizational commitment. For example, if the behavioural commitment of younger, more highly educated, female employees at one division of this organization was positively influenced by the availability of the corporate day care centre there, then this organization (or a demographically similar organization) might want to look into providing some kind of child care support if they want to be seen as an appealing employer to this population.

Alternatively, the also valuable attitudinal commitment can be defined as the emotional attachment to, the enjoyment of having membership in, and the involvement in, an organization. Affective attachment is the strength of an individual's corporate identification and it extends beyond loyalty. It involves an active relationship with the organization such that individuals are willing to give something of themselves in order to contribute to the organization's well being. Employees with high levels of attitudinal commitment generally have an intention to exert effort. Contrary to the employees with a strong behavioural

commitment to their organization, employees with a strong affective commitment remain with their organization because they "want to" and not because they "need to".

Past research has found that employees with a high level of attitudinal commitment are generally more innovative, more considerate toward their co-workers, are more efficient with their use of time, and also, have higher ratings from their supervisors with respect to their job performance and promotability (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979). Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) also found that employees who have a high level of affective attachment are generally more productive employees and they tend to be absent from work less. It is nothing short of obvious that employers would be interested in having a labour pool which registers high on an affective organizational attachment scale since it appears that organizationally attached employees may exhibit some desirable qualities at the work place. Reducing absenteeism and increasing innovativeness and productivity would translate into financial savings for employers, not to mention the non-monetary benefits of increased work force morale.

In addition, it appears critical for an organization to focus on enhancing the attitudinal commitment of the employees who remain after downsizing efforts have been put into play. Major restructuring and downsizing movements are usually met with a pool of remaining employees who are sceptical, sarcastic and apathetic. To change the scepticism, sarcasm and apathy, employers need to change the distrust into trust and they need to make the employee feel like the organization fully supports them. The results from this research suggest that the employees from this organization in general, are not as attitudinally attached to the organization as they are behaviourally committed. Results from the study reinforce the notion that attitudinal commitment scores are sensitive to issues of support. In this study, there was a statistically significant positive relationship between the believed availability of "physical and emotional health" benefits and affective attachment. "Physical and emotional health benefits included personal / family counseling, financial counseling upon separation, and an on-site fitness facility. These particular benefits are similar in that

they may send the message to employees that their employer values their "personal worth", and that these benefits are "corporate extras" or benefits beyond what is commonly offered in other organizations. Employers at this organization will be able to use this result to emphasize or develop new programs, policies or benefits which employees may perceive in the same way.

It flows logically then that the construct of perceived organizational support is intimately related to the construct of attitudinal organizational commitment. It has been shown in the past, and reinforced with this study, that employees with high levels of perceived organizational support also have high levels of attitudinal organizational commitment. Because it is likely that employers would be interested in maintaining a high degree of attitudinal commitment among their employees, looking at ways to increase the perception of organizational support is a reasonable strategy.

In general, employees who have high ratings of perceived organizational support tend to respect organizational priorities more fully and they tend to "want to" work for the organization more (Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986). By gaining information about how employees feel supported at their organization, it is very possible to enhance some programs and/or to encourage front line supervisors to deal with their employees in a different manner in order to manipulate the degree of support employees feel they have from their organization. Higher levels of perceived organizational support among employees were shown in this research to have a significant, large, positive influence on the affective attachment employees have toward their organization. For example, perceived organizational support was significantly related to affective attachment for both men and women with an average .42 point higher Affective Attachment score for every point higher score in the perceived support scale for men and a .57 point increase on the same scale for women.

In addition to direct relationships, the perception of support also needs to be recognized as a moderating variable whereby the perception of support can actually influence the

relationship between structural benefits and both behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitments. For example, in this study, the more supportive the organization was perceived to be by employees, the less of a relationship structural benefits had with both behavioural and attitudinal organizational commitment outcomes. Specifically, the more supportive the organization was perceived to be, the less effect the believed availability of "physical and emotional health" benefits (F/EAP 3) had on affective organizational attachment and the less effect "family / dependent care assistance" benefits (F/EAP 1) had on behavioural organizational commitment. (There is one exception to this generalization however. For men, the more supportive the organization was perceived to be, the more negative was the relationship between "alternative work arrangement" benefits and their average continuous commitment scores.) Although perceived organizational support was hypothesized to increase the positive relationship between structural supports and organizational commitment outcomes, it is equally as powerful to suggest that perceived organizational support may actually negate the importance of benefits and be a substitute for structural support.

Identifying perceived support as a moderating variable and / or accrediting perceived support as a family related benefit in and of itself is profound since managers and human resource professionals may come to realize that enhancing the commitment of their work force does not necessarily require spending more money. To date, perceived organizational support has rarely been studied in the work/family literature, has never been included as a family responsive provision in and of itself and has never been posed as the moderating variable that might influence the link between the organizational inputs of family / employee assistance provisions and organizational outcomes.

In summary, the link between affective organizational attachment and behavioural organizational commitment and an enhanced corporate bottom line can be realized from an understanding of the relationships that have been found in the literature with respect to recruitment, turnover, and retention. If employers are interested in manipulating their

organization's working conditions (F/EAPs and a supportive environment) to ensure that they are successful in recruiting and retaining employees, affective attachment and behavioural commitment are critical constructs to study. Putting in safety nets to side step the labour shortage is good business forecasting and the efforts that are required to do so will likely be sound investments.

With this information, human resource managers, desiring a high level of attitudinally committed employees, can also draw and investigate "commitment profiles" which can differentiate the employees who are likely to remain with their organization and will contribute positively to its effectiveness from those who are likely to remain but may contribute little. Managers should be able to use the results of this type of research to examine the antecedents of commitment (like specific questionnaire items for example) and better manage the experiences of their employees so as to foster the development of the desired affectively attached profile i.e. more productive and innovative, less absent, etc.

With the results of this research it is believed that some of the gray area surrounding the work-family interface has been clarified. At this point it seems likely that expanded empirical research will depend upon a beginning framework, like the Moderating Perception model, which could help to identify the forces behind and the potential impacts of implementing family support mechanisms in the work place. Results indicating the extent to which affective attachments and behavioural commitments of employees can be predicted from employer offered structural family provisions and perceived organizational support has a potentially significant contribution to make in management decision making. By acknowledging that perceptions interact with structural support, human resource managers and employers can better conceptualize their efforts to create a more family supportive work place. This type of information is valuable for employers and can be applied to the implementation of work place policy since employers and human resource professionals will be able to base some of their decisions on a type of cost / benefit analysis framework. That is, employers will better understand the commitment related organizational outcomes that are directly related to their actions and investments.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

University of Alberta

Balancing Work and Family

The Role of the Employer

1994 is the International Year of the Family. Balancing family and work responsibilities is a central theme of this commemoration because it is a critical issue for both employees and employers today.

At this time not much is known about the work-family issues of Canadian employees. As a family researcher, I am interested in the family related benefits and work environments which may help employees manage their work and personal lives. Your employer has agreed to allow me to do this survey because general results will be used to help them better deal with the issues you are facing today.

This survey should take about 25 minutes to complete. Individual responses are confidential and you will be anonymous. In other words, it will not be possible for any questionnaire to be traced back to any individual employee. **Questionnaires will be distributed and retrieved by the researcher only.**

If you do wish to participate, you will find a form for a free draw at the back of your questionnaire booklet which gives you a chance to win one of four dinners for two at a local restaurant. Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey. Your participation in this study is appreciated.

Lana Burnstad
Principal Investigator
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University of Alberta

What this survey is about:

This survey is divided into 4 sections.

The first section asks you about your involvement in family and work and your commitment to these areas.

The second section asks you how you feel about your organization and about how you think the organization feels about you.

The third section asks you about the availability of various benefits, options or services of your work place which may help you to balance your work and personal life.

Finally, the last section asks you a few general questions about your sex, age, etc.

By completing this questionnaire the challenges facing employees today will be better understood. This information will aid your employers as they try to better support their employees.

If you have any questions or would like to comment on this survey please call _____.

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disagree | somewhat disagree | neither agree nor disagree | somewhat agree | agree

Instructions

Listed below are statements that ask you about your present or expected personal commitment to marriage, family, home and work. Please complete all of the questions even if you are single and/or have no children. Think about your feelings and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the number which best reflects your feelings. For example, if you disagree with the statement, circle 1; if you neither agree or disagree with the statement, circle 3; or if you somewhat agree with the statement, circle 4.

The following 20 statements may reflect the way you feel about your family and about employment in general.

1.	I want to work, but I do not want to have a demanding career.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	It is important to me to have some time for myself and my own development rather than have children and be responsible for their care.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	I expect to commit whatever time is necessary to making my marriage partner feel loved, supported and cared for.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	I expect to leave most of the day-to-day details of running a home to someone else.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	I expect to make as many sacrifices as are necessary in order to advance in my work / career.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	I expect to devote a significant amount of my time and energy to the rearing of children of my own.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Devoting a significant amount of my time to being with or doing things with a marriage partner is not something I expect to do.	1	2	3	4	5

4

	disagree	somewhat disagree	neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	agree
8. I expect to devote the necessary time and attention to having a neat and attractive home.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I value being involved in a career and expect to devote the time and effort needed to develop it.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I expect to be very involved in the day-to-day matters of rearing children of my own.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I expect to put a lot of time and effort into building and maintaining a marital relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I expect to be very much involved in caring for a home and making it attractive.	1	2	3	4	5
13. I expect to devote a significant amount of my time to building my career and developing the skills necessary to advance in my career.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Becoming involved in the day-to-day details of rearing children involves costs in other areas of my life which I am unwilling to make.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Really involving myself in a marriage relationship involves costs in other areas of my life which I am unwilling to accept.	1	2	3	4	5
16. I expect to assume the responsibility for seeing that my home is well kept and well run.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I expect to devote whatever time and energy it takes to move up in my job / career field.	1	2	3	4	5
18. I do not expect to be very involved in child rearing.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I expect to work hard to build a good marriage relationship even if it means limiting my opportunities to pursue other personal goals.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Devoting a significant amount of my time to managing and caring for a home is not something I expect to do.	1	2	3	4	5

University of Alberta

	strongly disagree	moderately disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	moderately agree	strongly agree

Instructions

Listed below are statements that represent feelings that you might have about your current work organization and perceptions you might have about how your organization feels about you. Think about your own feelings and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the number which best reflects your feelings.
For example, if you disagree with the statement, circle 1; if you neither agree or disagree with the statement, circle 4; or if you strongly agree with the statement, circle 7.

These first fifteen statements reflect the way you may generally feel about your organization.

1.	I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this organization be successful.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	I talk up this organization to my friends as a great organization to work for.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I feel very little loyalty to this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I find that my values and the organization's values are very similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	I could just as well be working for a different organization as long as the type of work was similar.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	This organization really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6

	strongly disagree	moderately disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	moderately agree	strongly agree
9. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I am extremely glad that I chose this organization to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. There's not too much to be gained by sticking with this organization indefinitely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization's policies on important matters relating to its employees.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I really care about the fate of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. For me this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. Deciding to work for this organization was a definite mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The next set of statements may reflect the way you think your organization feels about you.

1. The organization values my contribution to its well-being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. If the organization could hire someone to replace me at a lower salary it would do so.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. The organization fails to appreciate any extra effort from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The organization strongly considers my goals and values.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. The organization would understand a long absence due to my illness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The organization would ignore any complaint from me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. The organization disregards my best interests when it makes decisions that affect me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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	strongly disagree	moderately disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	moderately agree	strongly agree
8. Help is available from the organization when I have a problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The organization really cares about my well being.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. The organization is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. The organization would fail to understand my absence due to a personal problem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. If the organization found a more efficient way to get my job done they would replace me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. The organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. It would take only a small decrease in my performance for the organization to want to replace me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. The organization feels there is little to be gained by employing me for the rest of my career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. The organization provides me little opportunity to move up the ranks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Even if I did the best job possible, the organization would fail to notice.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. The organization would grant a reasonable request for a change in my working conditions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. If I were laid off, the organization would prefer to hire someone new rather than take me back.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favour.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. The organization cares about my general satisfaction at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8

	strongly disagree	moderately disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	moderately agree	strongly agree
22. If given the opportunity, the organization would take advantage of me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. The organization shows very little concern for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. If I decided to quit, the organization would try to persuade me to stay.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. The organization cares about my opinions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. The organization feels that hiring me was a definite mistake.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. The organization takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. The organization cares more about making a profit than about me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. The organization would understand if I were unable to finish a task on time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. If the organization earned a greater profit, it would consider increasing my salary.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. The organization feels that anyone could perform my job as well as I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. The organization is unconcerned about paying me what I deserve.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. The organization wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. If my job were eliminated, the organization would prefer to lay me off rather than transfer me to a new job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. The organization tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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	strongly disagree	moderately disagree	slightly disagree	neither agree nor disagree	slightly agree	moderately agree	strongly agree
36. My supervisors are proud that I am a part of this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. The organization accurately communicates its financial situation to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

The following eight statements may reflect your feelings about staying with or leaving this organization.

1. I am not afraid of what might happen if I quit my job without having another one lined up.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. It would be hard for me to leave my organization right now, even if I wanted to.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Too much in my life would be disrupted if I decided I wanted to leave my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. It would not be too costly for me to leave my organization now.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Right now, staying with my organization is a matter of necessity as much as desire.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving this organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. One of the few serious consequences of leaving this organization would be the scarcity of available alternatives.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. One of the major reasons I continue to work for this organization is that leaving would require considerable personal sacrifice - another organization may not match the overall benefits I have here.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10

Benefit Availability Information

For each of the following questions:

First, (a) indicate with a check mark whether or not you believe the listed employee benefit, option or service is available to you from your employer. If you don't know if the benefit, option or service is available to you, please check "don't know".

Next, (b) indicate with a check mark whether you have used this benefit or option in the past, if you would consider using it in the future, or if you have no intention of ever utilizing this benefit offered by your employer.

Finally, (c) indicate how important the benefit, option or service is, or would be, to you.

1 **a.** Does your employer allow you to be flexible in the hours you work?
(check one)

- ☐ No, flexible working hours are not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether flexible working hours are available to me
- ☐ Yes, flexible working hours are available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of flexible work hours at this organization.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never flex my working hours
- ☐ I would use flexible working hours in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used flexible working hours in the past

c. Circle a number which indicates how important flexible work hours are/would be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

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2 a. Would your employer allow you to take a legitimate paid leave, other than your own sick days, bereavement or vacation leave, if your children are sick, or if your regular child care arrangement breaks down? **(check one)**

- ☐ No, legitimate paid leave is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether legitimate paid leave is available to me
- ☐ Yes, legitimate paid leave is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of legitimate paid leave options at this organization. **(check all that apply)**

- ☐ I would never use legitimate paid leave
- ☐ I would use legitimate paid leave in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used legitimate paid leave in the past

c. Circle a number which indicates how important is/would legitimate paid leaves be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

3a. Would your employer allow you to work part-time at your present job? **(check one)**

- ☐ No, part-time work is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether part-time work is available to me
- ☐ Yes, part-time work is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of part-time work options at this organization. **(check all that apply)**

- ☐ I would never work part-time
- ☐ I would work part-time in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have worked part-time for this organization in the past

c. Circle a number which indicates how important part time work arrangements are/would be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

12

4a. Would your employer allow you to share your job with someone else?
(check one)

- ☐ No, the option of job sharing is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether the option of job sharing is available to me
- ☐ Yes, a job sharing option is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of job sharing at this organization.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use job sharing
- ☐ I would use job sharing in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used job sharing in the past

c. Circle a number which indicates how important job sharing options are/would be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

5a. Would your employer allow you to do some of your work at home?
(check one)

- ☐ No, a work at home option is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether a work at home option is available to me
- ☐ Yes, a work at home option is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of the working at home option at this organization.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use a work at home option
- ☐ I would use a work at home option in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have worked at home for this organization in the past

c. How important is it/would it be for you to be able to do some of your work at home?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

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6 a. Does your employer offer you relocation information and assistance if you get transferred?
(check one)

- ☐ No, relocation information and assistance is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether relocation information and assistance is available to me
- ☐ Yes, relocation information and assistance is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of this organization's relocation information and assistance program.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use the organization's relocation information and assistance
- ☐ I would use relocation information and assistance in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used relocation information and assistance in the past

c. How important is/would a relocation information and assistance program be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

7a. Can you obtain personal and/or family counselling from your employer?
(check one)

- ☐ No, personal and/or family counselling is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether personal and/or family counselling is available to me
- ☐ Yes, personal and/or family counselling is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of this organization's personal/family counselling options.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use personal and/or family counselling
- ☐ I would use personal and/or family counselling in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used personal and/or family counselling in the past

c. How important are/would personal and family counselling benefits be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

14

8 **a.** Is financial counselling available to employees separating/resigning from your work place?
(check one)

- ☐ No, financial counselling is not be available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether financial counselling is available to me
- ☐ Yes, financial counselling is available to me

b. Indicate your intended use of this organization's financial counselling program.

- ☐ I would not use financial counselling upon seperating/resigning
- ☐ I would use financial counselling when I separate/resign

c. How important is/would financial counselling be to you when you leave your present organization?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

9 **a.** Has a fitness facility been made available to you by your employer?
(check one)

- ☐ No, a fitness facility is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether a fitness facility is available to me
- ☐ Yes, a fitness facility is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of this organization's fitness facility.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use a fitness facility
- ☐ I would use a fitness facility in the future if...
- ☐ I have used the oraganization's fitness facility in the past

c. How important is/would an on-site fitness facility be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

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10 a. Have child care facilities been made available to you by your employer?
(check one)

- ☐ No, child care facilities are not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether child care facilities are available to me
- ☐ Yes, child care facilities are available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of this organization's child care facilities.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use the company's child care facilities
- ☐ I would use the company's child care facilities in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used the company's child care facilities in the past

c. How important is/would an on-site child care facility be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

11a. Are you allowed to select benefits in order to coordinate with those of your spouse or partner's?
(check one)

- ☐ No, I am not allowed to select my health care benefits
- ☐ I don't know if I can select my health care benefits or not
- ☐ Yes, I can select my health care benefits

b. Indicate your past or intended use of coordinating this organization's health care benefits.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would not co-ordinate my health care benefits with those of my spouse/partner
- ☐ I would coordinate my health benefits in the future
- ☐ I have coordinated my health benefits in the past

c. How important is/would a health benefit selection be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

12 a. Will your employer grant you an unpaid child-care leave up to 24 weeks after becoming a natural or adoptive parent?
(check one)

- ☐ No, unpaid child care leave is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether unpaid child care leave is available to me
- ☐ Yes, unpaid child care leave is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of this organization's unpaid child-care leave policy.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use an unpaid child care leave
- ☐ I would use an unpaid child care leave in the future if the need arises
- ☐ I have used an unpaid child care leave in the past

c. How important is/would an unpaid child care leave be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

The following question [#13] is only to be filled out if you are female

---

13a. The Unemployment Insurance program generally provides 57% of a person's salary as a maternity benefit for 15 weeks. Does your employer provide any additional pay during these 15 weeks? **(check one)**

- ☐ No, additional maternity pay is not available to me
- ☐ I don't know whether additional maternity pay is available to me
- ☐ Yes, additional maternity pay is available to me

b. Indicate your past or intended use of additional maternity pay.
(check all that apply)

- ☐ I would never use additional maternity pay
- ☐ I would use additional maternity pay in the future if the need arose
- ☐ I have used this additional maternity pay in the past

c. How important is/would additional maternity pay be to you?

not important 1 2 3 4 5 very important

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Personal Information

1. Check whether you are...
   - ☐ male
   - ☐ female

2. Check whether you are employed...
   - ☐ full time
   - ☐ part-time
   - ☐ on contract

3. Indicate the **number of years** you have worked for this company.
   ____ years

4. Check if you have ever left this company and then returned as an employee at a later time.
   - ☐ no
   - ☐ yes

5. Check whether you are...
   - ☐ married or living common-law
   - ☐ not married
   - ☐ widowed

6. If you are married or are living common law, please indicate with a check mark the **employment status of your spouse or partner**.
   - ☐ not employed
   - ☐ employed part-time
   - ☐ employed full time

7. Indicate the **number of children** you have in each of the following age categories or check the response that indicates you have no children.

   I have ___ children under 1 year

   I have ___ children between 1 - 2 years of age

   I have ___ children between 3 - 5 years of age

   I have ___ children between 6 - 9 years of age

   I have ___ children between 10 - 13 years of age

   I have ___ children between 14 - 19 years of age

   I have ___ children over 20 years of age

   ☐ I have no children

8. If you do have children, please indicate **how many** live with you.
   ___ children live with me

9. Please indicate the number of aged parents or handicapped family members who are dependent on you for support.

____ aged parents

____ handicapped family members

10. Please indicate your age.

____ years

11. Check the "occupational position" that best describes what you do.

- ☐ senior management
- ☐ middle management
- ☐ non-union
- ☐ union -
  - ☐ position "A"
  - ☐ position "B"
  - ☐ position "C"
  - ☐ position "D"
  - ☐ position "E"
  - ☐ other

12. Check the category of your 1993 gross annual household income from all earners and other sources.

- ☐ under 10 000
- ☐ 10 000 to 19 999
- ☐ 20 000 to 29 999
- ☐ 30 000 to 39 999
- ☐ 40 000 to 49 999
- ☐ 50 000 to 59 999
- ☐ 60 000 to 69 999
- ☐ 70 000 to 79 999
- ☐ 80 000 to 89 999
- ☐ 90 000 and over

Comments

Thank-you for your participation!

Appendix B

Union Representative Letter Copy

Local Chairman

Dear _____,

I am a graduate student completing my Masters degree at the University of Alberta. (Your organization) has allowed me to survey a total of approximately 500 employees in order to conduct my research to complete my thesis. I was asked to inform all the union representatives of the questionnaire that was circulated on April 13 and April 14 to some Alberta district employees (approximately 90) working out of the Edmonton area.

My research pertains to balancing work and family. I am interested in employee commitment to work and family lives and I am investigating the benefits and work environments at (your organization) which best support employees who are juggling work and family responsibilities. This research is timely as it fits in nicely with 1994 as the International Year of the Family.

Completing the survey is completely voluntary and all participants will remain anonymous. In other words, it will not be possible for any questionnaire to be traced back to any individual employee. With employees volunteering to complete this questionnaire, the family challenges facing employees today will be better understood. General results will be given to some human resource professionals as they strive to support the changing family structures and needs of their employees today.

As you will see, the Balancing Work and Family questionnaire is enclosed. In addition to looking it over, it would be greatly appreciated if you too, would fill it out and return it to my university address. I think union representatives would add an important perspective to the 'work / family issue'. (You can send the draw form in a separate envelope to ensure confidentiality.) Understanding the needs of the people will help human resource professionals better meet the needs of the people. If you have any questions or would like to comment on this survey please call ___ (HRO) at ___ or myself at ____.

Thank you for your time.

Lana Burnstad